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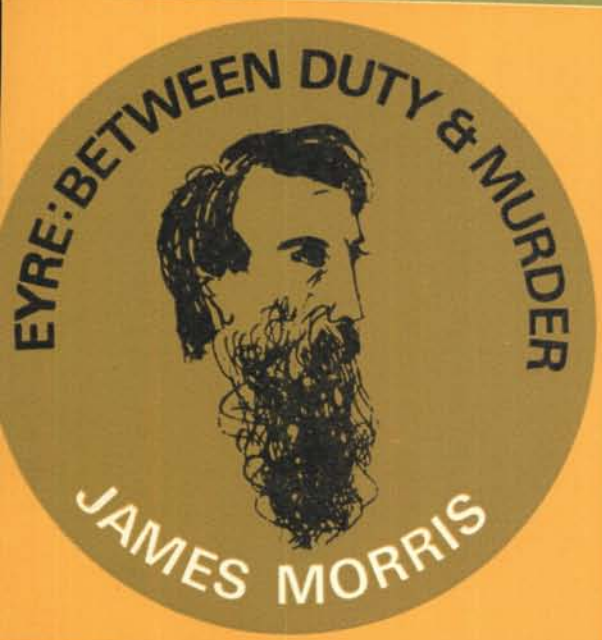

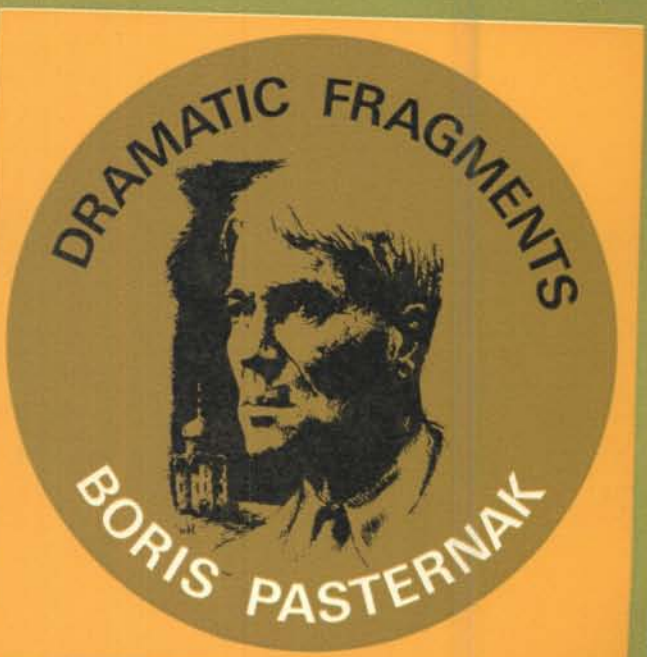

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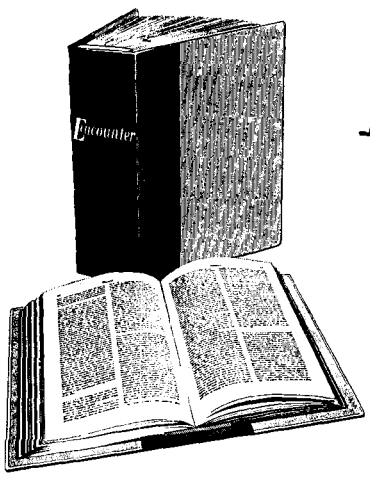

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Encounter

JULY 1970
VOL. XXXV NO. 1

Edited by MELVIN J. LASKY *and* NIGEL DENNIS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: *Goronwy Rees, Maurice Cranston, Anthony Hartley, John Mander, John Weightman.*
ASSISTANT EDITOR: *Margot Walmsley.* EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: *Bryan Healing.*
GENERAL MANAGER: *Anthony Robinson.* ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: *John Hall.*

Published monthly by Encounter Ltd. at Panton House 25 Haymarket London SW1.
Per copy: UK 7s: USA & Canada $1.25: India Rs. 4.80. Back numbers 7s. ($1.25).
Annual subscription: UK £4.0.0.: USA & Canada $14 (by air $15.50): India Rs. 54: Elsewhere £4.19.0.
Full-time students (state place and course of study): UK 63s.: USA & Canada $10: Elsewhere 63s.
Trade/Subscription Department: Encounter Ltd. 25 Haymarket London S.W.1 (01-839 7667).
US & Canadian Subscriptions: British Publications Inc. 30 East 60th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022.
US newstand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. P.O. Box 6014, Long Island City, N.Y. 11106.
Authorised as Second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for the payment of postage in cash.
Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. © *1970 by Encounter Ltd.*

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Between Duty and Murder

"IT IS *really terrible to see human nature naked....*"

FREDERIC ROGERS, *Permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office (on the revolt and repression in Jamaica, 1865)*

"What do you say to the Nigger insurrection on Jamaica and the brutalities of the English?" (ENGELS) *"The Jamaican story is characteristic of the beastliness of the 'true Englishman.' These fellows have no reason to criticise the Russians."* (MARX)

LETTERS OF ENGELS & MARX (*1865*)

"...in all I did my single desire was to do my duty faithfully."

GOVERNOR EYRE

(given a hero's welcome at Southampton on his return from Jamaica in 1866)

"...I believe it to be murder."

JOHN STUART MILL

(at a London protest meeting, at which he was elected chairman of the "Jamaica Committee")

Eyre

A Portrait — By JAMES MORRIS

IT WAS in Australia that I first set eyes on Edward John Eyre—in a literary or perhaps hallucinatory sense, for he died in 1901. Primed with tales of the Australian adventurers, and uncomfortably excited by the paintings of Mr. Sidney Nolan, I was flying for the first time westward from Adelaide; and looking below me through the almost clinically clear Australian air, which seems to have been purified in retorts to remove all smudge or moisture, I saw that we were travelling over the terrible sweep of bare coast that lies along the Great Australian Bight, with the desolation of the Nullabor Plain behind —thousands of square miles of scoured brownish wasteland, looking clinically malignant. Down there in my mind's eye I clearly saw Eyre's tragic but unlovable figure.

He was the first white man to cross this awful country—an English clergyman's son who had emigrated to Australia in 1832, aged 17, and found himself strangely suited to the empty intensity of the place. As we pursued our own cushioned course above his route, desperate episodes of his expedition suggested themselves to me. I remembered the forlorn departure from Fowler's Bay in the New Year of 1841—Eyre, his white overseer Baxter, his three aborigines Wylie, Neramberein, and Cootachah. I remembered the moment when Neramberein and Cootachah shot Baxter dead and decamped with almost all the stores. I imagined the nightmare hours of dusk through which the renegades shadowed Eyre and Wylie eerily at a distance through the bush, and the ghastly days and nights of thirst, when they lived by mopping up the morning dew, and the eagle stew they ravenously fed upon one day, and the dead penguin Wylie ate upon a beach, skin and all. Most disturbingly of all, somehow, I remembered a traumatic moment half-way through the journey: for having been unexpectedly succoured by a French whaling ship in Lucky Bay, and spending twelve civilised days on board, Eyre set off implacably once again, alone with the patient Wylie, for the last few hundred miles through rainstorms and misery to King George's Sound.

I saw him down there always with an aborigine at his elbow, for he seems to have felt an affinity for those strange shadow-characters of the never-never. He treated them with a kindness very rare among Australian pioneers, and presently became an exceptionally humane and scholarly Protector of Aborigines on the Murray River—"it is a lamentable thing," he

THE *four sketches in this article were drawn by the author.*

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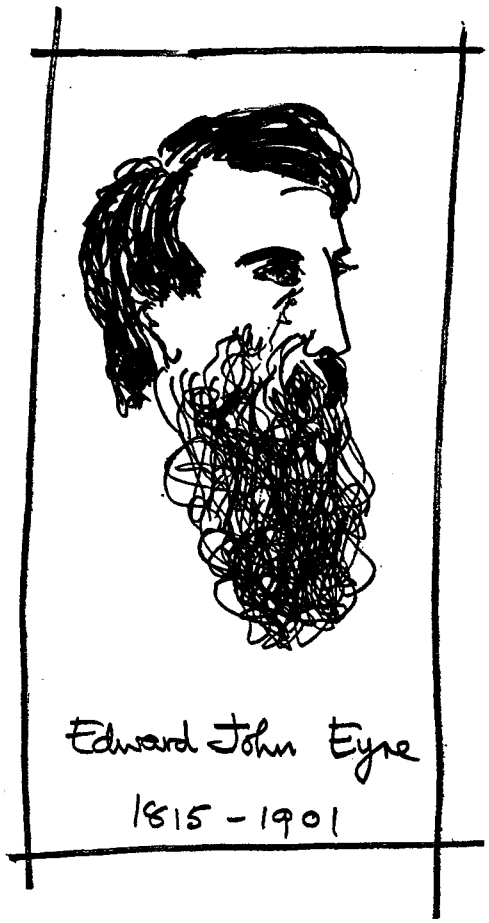
once wrote, "to think that the progress and prosperity of one race should conduce to the downfall and decay of another. . . ."

IN AUSTRALIA HE IS REMEMBERED as a benevolent hero still, and there is a Mount Eyre named for him, and an Eyre Peninsula, and a great salt lake. In New Zealand I found his legend more equivocal. In 1846 he was appointed lieutenant-governor of that colony, and again showed a particular empathy for the natives of the country: his marriage at Auckland in 1850 was a double ceremony with a Maori couple. In other ways, though, something blighted seems to have emerged in his character, as though the Australian wasteland had drained him of warmth and colour. He quarrelled incessantly, haggled about his salary, showed a preposterous fondness for gold braid and consequence, while sanctimoniously refusing calls on Sundays. His superior officer, the Governor, finally declined to answer his long argumentative letters and deprived him of all responsibilities. Eyre departed in 1853, for a post in the West Indies, leaving a memory behind him still courageous (there is an Eyre Peak in Otago), but petulant and obstinate too.



A hero in Australia; a prosy squabbler in New Zealand; it was in the Caribbean that Edward Eyre, in his 51st year, achieved the most unexpected of his reputations. For there as Governor of Jamaica, in the year 1865, he became known as a murderer.

HOPING TO SET THIS STRANGE MAN more clearly in the British imperial context, I went to Jamaica after him, and put up at Mona House, an old plantation house now run as an agreeable hotel on the outskirts of Kingston. Out of sight to the south were the unlovely streets of the capital. From my window I looked the other way, to the undulating seductive ridges of the Blue Mountains, around whose summits the storm-clouds moodily swirled. At night a little constellation of lights up there marked the hill-station of Newcastle, a Victorian show-piece of military enlightenment: and this twinkling spectacle served to keep my mind on my wider subject, besides making me feel at home (for the true addict of Empire, nothing is more reassuring than the presence of one of those Indian-style, red-roofed barrack blocks, familiar from Esquimault to Hong Kong, which are the most ubiquitous memorials of the lost Raj, and speak evocatively of cookhouse tea, scarlet serge and young Mr. Kipling).

First I tried to envisage the state of this delectable island in 1864, when Eyre was appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the colony, resident in King's House at Spanish Town. This little metropolis is now a dingy country town, redeemed only by a few fairly dilapidated colonial houses, a dignified cathedral and the old buildings of Government. Even in the 1860s it was squalid enough—"stricken with eternal death," Trollope thought it—but at least it was the island's capital, and had a political purpose. The Governor, as chief executive, had his offices and his palace there; and close by the elected Jamaican Assembly, the instrument of Jamaican constitutional government for nearly 200 years, held its often rumbustious debates. Most of the legislators were coloured men, but they were chosen by an infinitesimal electorate, and represented above all the interests of the planters and businessmen. They were backed off-stage by a high-

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spirited and irresponsible élite of white landed gentry, often the fifth generation of English settlers in the island, and they were nearly always at loggerheads with the Governor. Four thousand miles from England and higher authority, the little capital rocked with political mayhem and controversy. The Assembly building stood on one side of the central square, King's House on the other, and across the intervening garden executive and legislature metaphorically and sometimes physically (for one could easily see from window to window) glared.

Like most of the Caribbean colonies, Jamaica was in chronic trouble. It was half-destitute because of a slump in sugar exports, and because of high prices arising from the American Civil War. Moreover, it had never recovered from the emancipation of the slaves 30 years before. Many of its old estates were abandoned, or run by the listless and corrupt agents of absentee landlords. The Negroes, who were mostly reluctant to work for wages, coveted the lands thus left idle, and often squatted on them. The whites preserved a rigid colour bar, living lavishly but frequently in debt surrounded by servants in their Great Houses (as the plantation villas were called).

The colony was fearfully run-down. Roads were impassable, bridges were broken, plantations had reverted to bush. Kingston, the commercial centre, was full of filth and vice, and violent crime was common everywhere. In the inaccessible interior of the island a British garrison kept perpetual watch upon the Maroons, an inner nation of ex-slaves who had never been subdued by the British, but lived in treaty relationship with the Raj, largely and defiantly autonomous. Jamaica was riddled with queer religious revivals, Christian, pagan, and sometimes a combination of the two; it was embittered by racial grievance; and it was periodically ravaged by epidemics of cholera and smallpox—the stink of Kingston was said to be detectable several miles out at sea.

Above all the shadow of slavery fell across the island still, darkening the demagoguery of the agitators and the revivalists. Some Negroes thought emancipation had given them a statutory right to the ownership of land. Others were easily persuaded that the whites were preparing to make slaves of them again. A rosy glow has since been cast upon the old plantation society of Jamaica, but the Great Houses now mooned over by susceptible tourists were often built upon indescribably squalid foundations. In 1864 the pattern of life in them had not much changed, for all the fact of emancipation—the myriad servants merely managing to be, so Trollope tells us, servile and insolent at the same time.

I WENT TO A PROPERTY near Falmouth, in the north, which is perhaps the best surviving example of an old slave estate. It is a cattle ranch now, and elegant Negro cowboys ride about it, courteously raising their crops in greeting. On a hillock among shrubbery stands the derelict Great House, a middle-sized villa with verandahs, inhabited now by rats, lizards and a big barn owl, but still possessing a rakish, rum-and-magnolia charm. Nearby is the overseer's house, a yeoman dwelling, pretty in an unassuming way, as though always conscious of its place outside the Great House gates: and along the track is a handsome ruined hospital for the slaves, built in a classical mode, with elaborate steps to a well-proportioned hall. The remains of the mills, boiling-houses, and curing-houses have rather a churchy look, finely built in limestone in the centre of the big compound: across a green expanse are the rows of little cabins, like flimsy cricket pavilions, which still house the Negro employees of the estate, and mark the site of the slave quarters. Set about a pleasant green, with rolling downland all around, and those princely horsemen riding here and there, the place suggests an idyllic paternalism—gay kindly planters, spirituals around the baptismal font and ladies in crinolines hastening down to that hospital to soothe fevered black brows.

But Jamaican slavery was not all like that. In 1864, I had to remind myself as I drove away through the poincianas, Negroes could still remember the days when offending employees were hung from trees and flogged, nailed by their ears to posts, clamped in iron collars. Some were forced to wear iron boots, some had hands or legs amputated, some had their teeth drawn or their ears cut off. Amelioration laws decreed from London were generally disregarded in this self-governing colony, and in effect the slave had been utterly at the mercy of his employer—or worse still, his owner's wife—however capricious, demanding, or sadistic. When emancipation came at last the Jamaica Negroes celebrated it with mystic fervency. Down the hill in Falmouth I went to see the Knibb Memorial Baptist Church, where it was celebrated most mystically of all. Its pastor was

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the celebrated evangelical reformer William Knibb, born in Northamptonshire, and as the hands of the church clock approached midnight on 31 July 1838, this passionate visionary addressed his congregation in an atmosphere almost psychedelically intense.

"The hour is at hand," he cried, pointing a shaking finger at the clock, "the monster is dying!"—and as midnight struck, and as Knibb shouted triumphantly "The monster is dead! The Negro is free!" so the congregation leapt to its feet and broke into a deafening and protracted acclamation—singing, shouting, cheering, weeping. The Negro was free! They took the symbols of slavery, chain, whip and iron collar, and buried them in a coffin in the churchyard, singing a dirge as they did so:

Now slavery, we lay thy vile form in the dust,
And buried for ever let it there remain!
And rotted and covered with infamy's rust,
Be every man-whip and fetter and chain.

Even now these passions have meaning in Falmouth, though the Knibb Memorial Church is a modern building, erected after a hurricane in 1944. When I peered through the door that morning, tripping ineptly over my own shoes, a hundred curious black faces turned to inspect me. It was a Sunday, and the congregation was in the middle of a sermon by Mr. Knibb's successor; but braving the severe scrutiny of the adults and the sibilant nudgings of the white-collared and pink-ribboned children, I loitered on the steps a little longer, and made out in the shadows at the other end of the building a bas-relief commemorating that very moment, long ago, when Mr. Knibb waited for midnight.

In 1864 slavery was all too terribly close; to most planters emancipation was still a bitter betrayal, to many Negroes the promises of liberty had not been fulfilled. Into this arena of resentment stepped E. J. Eyre.

THE WHITES were afraid of a general Negro insurrection. They remembered always the example of Haiti, whose declaration of independence in 1804 had been celebrated with a massacre of all the white inhabitants. The Negroes, though generally pathetically loyal to the person of Queen Victoria, distrusted British justice in Jamaica, resented the high rate of taxation, and were thought by the whites to be capable of any enormity. There were rumours of smuggled arms, seditious meetings, the drilling of armed men in the mountains. Revivalist preachers, sometimes no more than Christianised *obeah* men, were believed to be drumming up discontent—in particular, the ministers of a sect called the Native Baptists, who enjoyed the misguided support (so the whites thought) of the Baptist Missionary Society in England. A half-caste minister of this persuasion, William Gordon, was the most articulate leader of the Negroes: he was a man of property and a member of the Assembly, was prone to inflammatory racialist speeches, and had quarrelled so violently with his white fellow-magistrates in his home parish, St. Thomas-in-the-East, that he had been removed from office.

All this was happening at a particularly sensitive moment of imperial history. It was only seven years since the end of the Indian Mutiny, that savage clash of convictions which had severely shaken British faith in the inevitability of progress, and had left ghastly memories of butchery and vengeance. Cawnpore and Lucknow were horribly vivid in the British mind, embodied in awful lithograph and execrable verse, and British attitudes towards the coloured races had hardened. It was no longer accepted as axiomatic that black, brown, and yellow men were capable of redemption, if subjected to the proper techniques of Christian improvement. The Empire had always been a racialist structure, but the Mutiny gave its racialism a harsher and more contemptuous tinge. By 1864 probably a majority of educated Britons had come to sympathise with Carlyle, who once described the West Indian Negroes as "our beautiful black darlings . . . sitting yonder with their beautiful muzzles up to the ears in pumpkins, imbibing sweet pulps and juices . . . while the sugar-crops rot round them uncut, because labour cannot be hired, so cheap are the pumpkins. . . ."

Certainly Edward Eyre, a stiffly orthodox Anglican, believed that the Jamaican Negro was his own worst enemy. The real cause of discontent, he reported to the Colonial Office after a few months as Governor, was "the incorrigible indolence, apathy and improvidence of all ages, and the degraded and immoral social existence which they all but universally lead." When a Negro petition was sent to the Queen asking for economic help, it was answered on Eyre's advice by an unctuous proclamation known unhappily as "The Queen's Letter." It was by their own industry and prudence that the Negroes must improve their conditions, said this repellent exhortation; "*Her*

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Majesty will regard with interest and satisfaction their advancement through their own merits and efforts."

THE GOVERNOR was an inflexible man, rather prone to self-pity, and he was in no mood to be defied by a population of immoral and indolent peasants. He doubtless felt secure not only in the assurance of his own rectitude, but also in the assumption that the powers of Empire would stand beside him, if he dealt severely with black subversion. One day in August 1865, a small deputation of Negroes plodded into the square at Spanish Town. They had walked some 45 miles from the hill country of St. Thomas-in-the-East, the other side of Kingston, and they wished to lay before the Governor the grievances of their community. They presented themselves at the palace door, above whose portico the flambeaux flared, and through whose portals there presently arrived, I imagine, some lofty and liveried attendant. The petitioners explained themselves and waited: but presently the servant returned to say that His Excellency would not receive them, so back they walked into the mountains again.

THE LEADER OF THE DELEGATION was Paul Bogle of Stony Gut, a settlement in the mountains north of Morant Bay. Bogle was a prosperous farmer, an ordained deacon of the Native Baptist Church, and a protégé of Gordon. Today he is a Jamaican national hero. Stony Gut is a difficult place to find, but when once I had penetrated there through the maze of steep little roads, richly foliaged, that criss-cross those inviting hills, I soon found an elderly countryman ready to take me to "the Bogle place." It had been raining heavily, and the woods gleamed and dripped with damp. We put on gumboots on the verandah of the general store, watched shakily by a couple of genial inebriates, and slithered away down a hillside through the trees—heavily scented with sap and aromatic bark, and packed densely down the slope. There was no track, the ground was rutted and muddy, and sometimes my guide cleared a way with his machete;[1] until, quite close to the road but in atmosphere powerfully remote, we came upon a jumbled heap of stones, overgrown with ground-foliage in what had once recognisably been a clearing. This was Paul Bogle's headquarters.

Here, in the autumn of 1865, a kind of religio-military cult thrived. The settlement consisted of a house, a yard, and a heavily built chapel which served also as a fort: and in it Bogle assembled several hundred militant black supporters determined to right their wrongs by force. Armed with machetes, pikes, and bludgeons, they drilled assiduously among the woods, sang their hymns discordantly in the chapel, administered their own justice, swore death to the white man, marched and countermarched among the forest trees, blew their conch shells, played their fifes and beat their drums—insulated there secretly among the woodlands, so that only the neighbouring villagers could hear these arcane goings-on. They were very simple men, concerned chiefly with local grievances, and inspired as much perhaps by their gimcrack brand of Christianity as by any coherent political philosophy, but they were in touch with militants elsewhere. "Blow your shells," ran one of their almost incantatory recruiting letters,

> roule your drums! house to house; take out every man; march them down to Stony Gut; any that you find take them in the way; take them down with their arms; war is at my black skin, war is at hand.... Cheer, men! Cheer in heart! ... When you do come to Stony Gut ... blow your shells and tell what place you is from before entered.

Bogle was already at odds with the white magistrates who represented law and order at Morant Bay, and on 9 October 1865 a squad of Negro policemen was sent up to Stony Gut to arrest him, and 28 of his followers, for sedition. Bogle's men promptly beat them up and threw them out, except for three who were temporarily taken prisoner and made to swear, upon pain of death, to "join their colour." Two days later the little army, waving its weapons, declaiming its pious slogans and trumpeting its conches, set off itself for Morant Bay to attack the citadel of white reaction in the parish of St. Thomas, the Court House.

Down they marched, down the winding track through the mountains, fortified by their own concoction of rum and gunpowder, and keeping their spirits up too with the music of drum and fife. Once there were rumours of a

[1] An implement of many uses in Jamaica. When, early in 1970, a police constable intervened in a petty argument in the village of Black Gate, one of the participants beheaded him with his machete. A crowd of onlookers then chopped the murderer into pieces with theirs.

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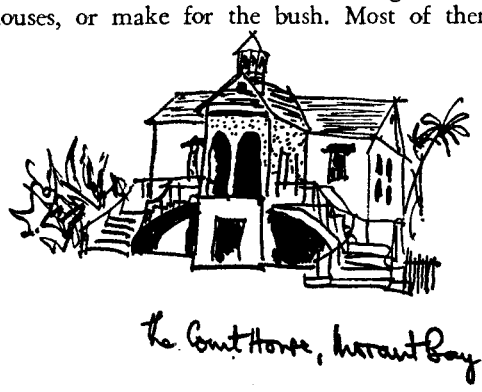
Government force coming to meet them, and they hid for a time in the bush: but friends joined them as they passed, villagers ran flatteringly out to watch them, and when they entered the little town of Morant Bay, clustered on a bluff above the sea, a large crowd assembled to the beat of the drum, pressing about those fierce-faced motley militants, waving their pikes and cutlasses still, as they marched along the modest main street of the town, and burst into the square before the Court House.

THE SCENE has not much changed. The scale is very small. The Court House, a trim and authoritative little building up a double flight of steps, looks much the same as it did then. The chickens still scrabble among the outhouses to the left, there is still a church to the right, and behind the Court House, among a huddle of indeterminate administrative buildings, a solitary old cannon still looks out to sea. Symmetrical, confined and rather pretty, the square is just the place for violent action. It reminded me of one of those eerily deserted shanty-town streets through which the gunfighters of the westerns, hands on butt, menacingly approach each other in the afternoon.

The magistrates were in session inside the Court House, but Morant Bay had been warned of Bogle's approach, and a line of red-coated Volunteers was drawn up at the end of the square. They fired a single volley, dispersing the sightseers but having little effect upon the rebels, before they were assaulted by a shower of stones and bottles, and fallen upon with bludgeons, machetes and even a fish-spear. They were swept aside, and before long the Court House was fired. The magistrates inside were forced from room to room until at last they made a break for it, stumbling out of the burning buildings to run the gauntlet of the mob, hide in backstreets, seek shelter in neighbouring houses, or make for the bush. Most of them were caught. Some were chopped to pieces with machetes, some were bludgeoned to death, one had his throat cut and his mouth wrenched open with a stick. In all 17 white people were killed and 31 wounded. (One black man was murdered too—a builder sometimes employed by the authorities, who was said to have "a black skin and a white heart.")



The Court House, Morant Bay

The rioters were exuberant. They left the burning building and the shambled square, and went off to release the prisoners in the town gaol: since they were not rebelling against Queen Victoria, they said, they would respect her property, and the convicts were told to discard their prison uniforms. Then off they went again up the long winding track to Stony Gut, into the dense woodlands of the foothills, blowing their horns triumphantly now, dusty and bloodstained but ecstatic. They had harmed no women or children in Morant Bay; they had done very little looting; they had carefully spared the two white doctors of the town; but they undoubtedly saw themselves as the advance guard of a Negro crusade, its purpose a little vague but its spirit truly evangelical. When they reached the clearing in the forest, they filed into the fortress-chapel for a religious service. It was three o'clock in the morning, and the scene must have been weird—all those black exalted peasants, sweating from the day's bloodshed and emotion, kneeling in the lamplight in their silent fastness. Bogle himself addressed the congregation, as their pastor and their commander, and gave humble thanks that "God had succeeded him in this work."

Bogle is half-deified himself in Jamaica now. His statue stands Christ-like outside the rebuilt Court House in Morant Bay, his memory is idealised in the school textbooks, even his pock-marked face ("very ferocious looking," a contemporary reporter thought, "the very type of the fiend") is selectively immortalised upon bank notes. At Stony Gut they seemed rather vague about him, but suggested I might drive down to Lyssons, on the coast, and introduce myself to his surviving great-grandson. This I promptly did. He lives in a spotless small cabin down a rocky footpath, not far from the big Princess Margaret Hospital on the coast road. His wife was doing the ironing on the verandah when I arrived, and his daughter presently came along carrying an adorable baby. They were Bogles all and proud of it. Paul was very well remembered in the family, they told me, and Mr. Bogle had heard many stories

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about him in his own childhood. What kind of stories, I wondered? What sort of man had the rebel been, when he was not on the path of black power? Was he fierce? Was he kind? Was he majestic? Mr. Bogle paused to consider for a moment, and Mrs. Bogle looked up expectant from the ironing-board. "He was a lovely man," Mr. Bogle said.

GOVERNOR EYRE did not think so. The news of the Morant Bay affair raised some terrible questions. Was this the beginning of that threatened insurrection? Was it part of an island-wide conspiracy? Eyre very properly took no chances. Martial law was declared throughout the county of Surrey, the eastern third of Jamaica, except in Kingston itself: and the regular trops of the Crown, about 600 strong, were swiftly mobilised to contain the rebellion. They occupied the coastal towns of Surrey, and closed the passes through the mountains to the north. In addition the Maroons, who stayed firmly loyal to their British treaty, supplied some 300 formidable if unorthodox soldiers, while the frigate *Wolverine* and the gunboat *Onyx* ferried troops, provided landing parties and maintained communications between Kingston and Morant Bay.

It was rainy weather, and the campaigning was tough. As I wandered myself through the hill country, hot jungly terrain intersected by deep ravines, its precipitous tracks often washed away by a single torrential storm, I imagined readily enough the temper of the soldiery in 1865: loaded down with pack and musket, stacked up with extra rations of beef and rum, hacking and cursing their way from valley to valley, village to village, sometimes for days at a time without taking their boots off. Many were veterans of the Mutiny, and by and large they were not of a liberal temper. When they came to a Negro village, they burnt it. When they encountered a black man, they flogged him if he stopped, shot him if he ran.

No revengeful Queen's battalion in Oudh or Rajputana behaved more ferociously than these embittered soldiers. "Hole is doing splendid service," reported the Deputy Adjutant General to his superior, "shooting every black man who cannot account for himself (60 on the line of march)."

> I must tell you [wrote a private soldier to his parents in Hampshire] that I never see such a site before as we are taking them prisoners by a hundred per day—we saved them for the next morning to have some sport with them. We tied them up to a Tree and give them 100 laishes, and afterwards put a shot into their heads.

One captured rebel was used as a rifle target, the firing party shooting him at 400 yards. A servant of Bogle's was tied to an officer's stirrup and made to divulge the names of rebel conspirators—"a revolver now and then to his head causes us thoroughly to understand each other." A woman at Stony Gut was flogged to make her reveal Bogle's whereabouts: she got 25 lashes first, another 25 a quarter of an hour later, another 25 half an hour later still, and was then left all night with a rope around her neck as an earnest of things to come.

DOWN IN MORANT BAY courts martial quickly disposed of prisoners. They were held under the aegis of the Provost Marshal, Police Inspector Gordon Ramsey, who had fought in the Charge of the Light Brigade, had won a Victoria Cross, and was probably not quite sane—a year later he killed himself. Negroes were flogged for neglecting to remove their hats in his presence, or answering back. One man was hanged because he ground his teeth. The court martial members were junior army and navy officers, and they handed down death sentences with a merciless panache—the condemned men being hanged symbolically from the ruined courthouse arch (generally by sailors, for as the president of the court once observed, "they are handier with ropes than soldiers are."). All in all, retribution was terrible in Surrey County. Martial law continued in force for its maximum legal period, 30 days, and 439 Negroes were shot or hanged. Some 600 more were flogged, mostly without trial, and about 1,000 dwelling-places were destroyed. The rebellion was suppressed absolutely. No resistance was offered after the first few days, and the rest of Jamaica remained peaceful.

Bogle himself was soon caught. They gave him the distinction of hanging him from the yard-arm of the *Wolverine*, lying in Morant Bay: and his settlement at Stony Gut was razed to the ground, farmhouse, chapel and all, leaving only the jumbled pile of stones, and the shadowy folk-memory, that I found there a century later.

EYRE ASSUMED that Gordon was the real force behind the rebellion, and put out a warrant for his arrest. Four days later he gave

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himself up at the military headquarters in Kingston. This placed the Governor in a quandary. There was no martial law in Kingston, and a trial there would be a protracted, litigious affair, embroiled in politics, religion and every kind of local side-issue. Besides, Gordon had not been near St. Thomas-in-the-East during the troubles. The evidence for his complicity was largely circumstantial, and in Kingston, before a properly appointed court of the Queen's Justices, he might well be acquitted.

But Eyre was perfectly certain of the man's moral if not his legal guilt, and in this he was almost certainly right. Gordon often talked freely of insurrection—he had publicly called the Governor "an animal... voracious for cruelty and power"—he had encouraged Bogle in his activities in Stony Gut—he was a sworn enemy of the magistrates at Morant Bay. There is even evidence that he was in touch with the Government of Haiti. Eyre was determined that no quibbles of legalism would save this villain from his deserts: he had clearly made up his mind that the man must hang, and applied to the task his stubborn will and his lonely sense of duty.

He decided to take Gordon to Morant Bay, and have him tried there by court martial. He must have known that this was illegal, but he presumably supposed that the end justified the means. Nobody, after all, had been blamed for far more terrible irregularities during the suppression of the Indian Mutiny. Together the two men embarked upon the *Wolverine* and sailed out of Kingston Harbour—past the morose remains of Port Royal, once the most uproarious town in the Caribbean, whose preeminence had been destroyed by an earthquake in 1692 but whose old Fort Charles still stood gloomily by the sea—out into the bay where, looking back towards the island, captor and captive could see the mysterious mass of the Blue Mountains rising range upon range above the filthy city, sheltering in their thick bush and high dark forests all the secret resentments of the blacks.

They were like allegorical specimens, the two passengers: both religious and indeed self-righteous men, both deeply committed to causes: one representing, if at many removes, the autocratic certainty of the white West, the other expressing, if incoherently, the lost pride of primitive sovereignty. A storm allegorically blew up, too, as they sailed along the coast, and kept them tossing and miserable outside Morant Bay. When they disembarked upon the little quay, they must both have looked distressed. Eyre was a tall, thin man, narrow-chested, dry-looking, heavily bearded and powerfully nosed, his movements oddly awkward, the look in his eye introspective but reproving. Gordon, led ashore by guards, looked paradoxically kindred. He too had a desiccated air, if we can judge by his photograph, his face too lacked warmth or humour, his mouth was set forbiddingly, as in caricatures of hell-fire evangelists, and his steel-rimmed spectacles look in the pictures as though they might ominously glint.

Gordon was led ashore through a crowd of sailors. They abused him as he passed, and behaved as though they would happily tear him limb from limb. The British sailor was a rough diamond in the 1850s, and the language used that day, thought one eye-witness, was "hardly the thing to put to paper." *"Would you like a taste of the cat, you old bastard?" "By Jesus, you'll catch it!" "Set the bloody dogs on him!" "You won't be long here, you old windbag, we'll soon string you up!"* Gordon winced to each epithet: and Governor Eyre, the vicar's son, we may reasonably surmise, preferred not to hear.

Gordon's judges were two naval lieutenants and an ensign of the West India Regiment. The principal charge was high treason. Most of the evidence presented was, by formal legal standards, inadmissible. The trial lasted six hours. The sentence was inevitably death. "General Nelson has just been kind enough to inform me," Gordon wrote to his wife, "that the court martial... has ordered me to be hung, and that the sentence is to be executed in an hour hence: so that I shall be gone from this world of sin and sorrow." It was a grey overcast September morning; the clouds hung heavily over the hills; they took him up the steps of the Court House, bound his hands and feet, and hanged him from the arch.

Governor Eyre, having delivered his charge to judgment, did not wait for the execution, but returned to his palace in Spanish Town. There the news of Gordon's death was brought to him. In a very real sense it was his own death too. For the rest of his life he was haunted by the fact of that court martial in Morant Bay, which ended his career as absolutely and almost as squalidly as if he had himself dangled, noosed and pinioned, from the arch of the Court House door.

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ONLY A FAÇADE REMAINS of King's House now, for the palace was burnt in 1925. It remains impressive nevertheless, with its classical portico and the curled iron brackets of its flambeaux, the melancholy remains of its pleasure garden behind and the faded splendour of its formal square in front.

The square is an 18th-century creation, a deliberately imposing ensemble designed to commemorate British power in the Caribbean. On the north side is John Bacon's well-known memorial to Admiral Rodney, erected in 1783 to honour the victory of The Saints, which saved Jamaica from the French. Flanked by captured cannon, ornamented with banners, unicorns, tritons and sculpted battle-scenes, the Admiral stands dressed as a Roman grandee pointing his baton imperiously into the square, and has a small hole in his back which is really the mark of some joist or pulley, but is taken by simpler citizens to represent the bullet-hole that killed him.[2] Opposite Rodney is the Court House, an unremarkable Georgian building, and to his left is the old Assembly Hall in agreeable red brick, with lounging scholars to be observed reading the morning papers in the library downstairs, and droning bureaucratic noises emerging from the council offices above.

King's House is on the west side of the square. In its day it was the finest Government House in the West Indies, and old pictures of its entrance hall show it terrifically dignified, with Tuscan columns and chandeliers and galleries and enormous royal portraits. Nelson and Rodney were both received here: so was Captain Bligh, when he arrived at Jamaica at last with his cargo of breadfruit trees from the Pacific, only to find that the West Indians preferred the plantain anyway. For me, though, the building is dominated by Eyre's tormented presence, and sometimes I drove over to Spanish Town, found myself a seat beneath the Royal palms, and thought about his story.

The longer I envisaged him in that great house, attended by all the pomp of colonial authority, the more I saw him as a victim of the great imperial dilemma—the conflict between means and ends. The British often acted cruelly, in pursuit of what they honestly believed to be their civilising mission: destroying the crops of Afghan villagers, firing guns into Zulu caves, cold-bloodedly murdering the last of the Moghul Emperors. Half-a-century later General Dyer found many supporters, plus a £26,000 public testimonial, when his Gurkha soldiers killed 300 Indian demonstrators in Amritsar. The very Empire itself, forcibly held together by the Power whose prerogative it was to teach the nations how to live, was a contradiction in moral terms.

Eyre himself was hailed by the whites of Jamaica—and by many of the blacks, too—as the saviour of the colony. Many European lives were probably saved by the severity of his action, and possibly a general rebellion was averted. But by our standards the means were unjustifiable—400 lives for 17, thousands of innocent people humiliated, thousands more made homeless, the law flouted, human rights abused. I wondered, as I meditated there, if Eyre thought so himself. His manipulation of justice was certainly unforgivable, and on the face of it his whole conduct seemed to express a contempt for the Negro, and a suspicion of their intentions, that jarred against his treatment of the aborigines in his youth. But the issues, it seemed to me, were not so clear-cut as his critics or his advocates generally assumed. Eyre could not have known of the military excesses in the field, and the fact that he treated different coloured races differently showed at least that he did not merely classify people by the tint of their skin. That the Jamaica rebels were black was irrelevant to his excesses: indeed when the rebellion was over he summoned the Assembly and persuaded its members, after two centuries of fiercely defended independence, to abdicate their powers to the Colonial Office—tacit recognition that the plantation empire was dead, that the whips and chains of slavery really must be buried, and that the relationship between black and white had moved into a new phase. He took advantage, in fact, of a cruel catastrophe to win a liberal victory—for which successive Governors had vainly struggled during generations of dispute with the reactionary Assembly. He seemed to me like a man trapped within convictions: not a savage man, but forced into savagery; not a racialist, but obliged to act like one; not even a strong man really, but impelled into strength by that very same streak of stubbornness which, long before at Lucky Bay, had sent him off once more on the next 300 miles to King George's Sound.

AS I WAS SITTING THERE in the sun one day, thinking about these matters and working up

[2] He died in his bed in Hanover Square.

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my notes, a group of Negro youths accosted me in a languid sort of way. What was I doing in Jamaica, they asked? I told them of my enquiries, and they responded predictably. That Governor Eyre, they said, was a proper bastard. He hated the black man. It was Eyre who ought to have been hanged, not Gordon or Bogle. He was a real bastard.

"Take it easy," they added, sprawling comfortably beside me on the seat, "we don't mean nothing personal. Sit back and relax—take it easy...." And coiling themselves rather like foliage around my seat, and occasionally bursting into rhythmic patter, they began to tell me about their cousins in Birmingham.

When the news of Eyre's actions broke in England, there was a furore. "Twelve Miles of Dead Bodies!" said the newspaper headlines, and a Commission of Inquiry was sent out to Jamaica. It found Eyre skilful, prompt and vigorous in his immediate reactions to the rebellion, but thought his use of martial law excessive, and condemned the severity of the punishments. The Governor was removed from his post, and in August 1866 returned to England—where he at once found himself the hapless central figure in an archetypal *cause célèbre*.

The philanthropic lobbies of England, particularly those whose energies were channelled through the institution called Exeter Hall, believed that mere dismissal from office was quite insufficient punishment for a man like Eyre—"Old 'Angsman," as the people called him. A body called the Jamaica Committee was established to bring him to book, and numbered among its members John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, a number of Nonconformist tycoons, many academics and clergy, and Thomas Hughes of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Its leaders resolved to prosecute Eyre privately for nothing less than the murder of William Gordon. In opposition to them was founded the Eyre Defence Committee, supported most prominently by men of imagination: Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Tennyson, Charles Kingsley, backed by 71 peers, 20 members of Parliament, 40 generals, 26 admirals and 400 clergymen, mostly Anglican.

The controversy raged on and off for two years, and passions ran high. Families were divided, friendships broken. Charges of hypocrisy, stupidity, snobbery and wrong-headedness flew between the partisans. There was a debate in Parliament, funds were raised, pamphlets furiously printed. Motives varied wildly, and language was unrestrained—Eyre was "the personification of wrong," the "saviour of society in the West Indies," "a murderer whose hands were red with blood," "a brave, gentle, chivalrous and clear man," "The Martyr," "The Monster," "'Angsman Eyre." Three times it went as far as the courts: once at the Old Bailey, once before the Court of Queen's Bench. Eyre was cleared each time.

Through it all the ex-Governor maintained an aloof and dignified silence. Once he appeared at a banquet. Once he defended himself in court—with a single speech four sentences long. For the rest he said nothing, wrote nothing, seldom appearing in public, never arguing his case or answering his detractors. When the affair died at last, he was left for 35 years without a job and with a reputation as equivocal as any in England. The Government of the day gave him a pension in the end, as a retired Colonial Governor, but he never got another appointment, and lived the last years of his life in silent seclusion in Devon.

There I followed him to his grave. I never managed to summon affection for the man: he seemed as inaccessible to me at the end as he had when I first heard of his peculiarly disheartening sort of heroism, labouring across the wastelands in discovery of nothing whatsoever. But I had grown to be sorry for him—so unloved, so stubborn, so hemmed in by the restrictions of his age and background, and in the end so self-disastrous. In 1896 he took a lease on Walreddon Manor, the property of Lord Devon, some five miles out of

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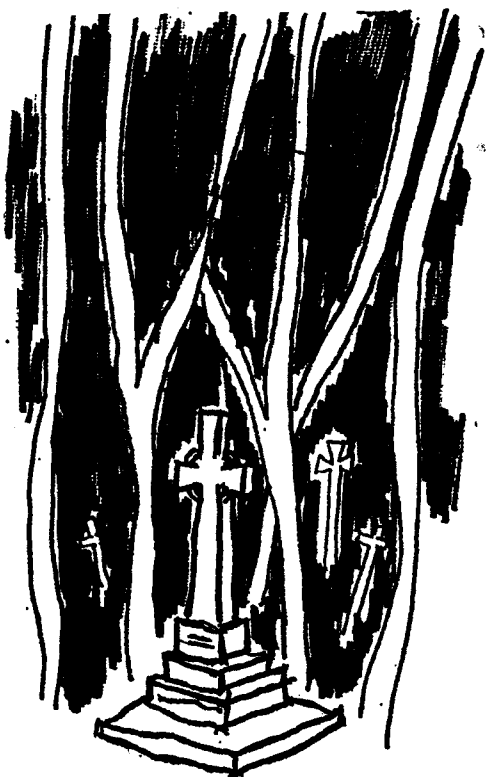
Tavistock on the edge of Dartmoor. He chose the house unquestionably for its remoteness. He wanted to be forgotten, and to forget. It was a stern stone manor house, medieval in origins, Tudor and Queen Anne in architecture, which lay above sloping lawns near the River Tavy. Even now it feels secret, and is reached by tortuous high-edged lanes, sloshed about in winter by running water from overflowing ditches. Seventy years ago it must have seemed almost eerily withdrawn, and it was haunted too by the ghost of an Elizabethan lady who was said to have murdered four successive husbands and thrown them down the *garde robe* (which still exists, on the first floor). Smothered in creeper in those days, and burdened with a heavy Victorian vicarage porch, Walreddon was a perfect last retreat for E. J. Eyre.



There is a lady living in Tavistock who was a parlour-maid at the house until Eyre's death in 1901, and who vividly recalls life there in the last months of the Governor's life. He, his wife and two of his children lived very privately, almost anonymously, and the household staff knew nothing of Eyre's tumultuous past. They called him "General Eyre," perhaps supposing him to be just another of those retired imperial soldiers who abounded in the West Country. At 85 Eyre was very deaf, and seldom left the house except to go to Sunday service at Whitchurch, over the hill, but he lived comfortably enough. The panelled Tudor dining-room at Walreddon had been caked all over with the brown paint of the Victorians, and was surveyed by a pair of queerly naïve animals on the wall—a monkey-faced lion and a grinning dragon, supporting an Elizabethan royal cipher of plaster: and in this odd room, at each end of their long table, the Governor and his lady habitually dined on venison off the moor, or well-hung game birds, with a maid behind each chair to serve them.

Eyre seemed a kindly old man, but did not talk much. After dinner he would retire to the drawing-room across the hall, which looked over the lawn to the empty fields beyond, and was heated only by a small fireplace in one corner: and there we may imagine him huddled for warmth, a deaf old man of bitter memories, his frame a little crookeder, his manner as reticent and ambiguous as it had always been, since he first crossed the Nullabor with the aborigines at his heels.

A certain stir was caused in Devon when Eyre died, and unsuspecting neighbours realised that the old gentleman at Walreddon had been Hangman Eyre of Jamaica: but it was 35 years since the event, and the passions had long subsided. They buried him in the graveyard at Whitchurch, within sight of the moor, beneath a cross of grey granite. The inscription says: *"Edward John Eyre, Australian Explorer and Governor of Jamaica. He did his duty in that state of life into which it pleased God to call him."* The cross is tall, but the churchyard is full of high Cornish and Celtic crosses, some slightly toppled with age, and is interspersed with slender trees: and on a winter day all these white and grey verticals, in dense perspective towards the distant moors, look rather like the sad silver gum-trees of the Outback.

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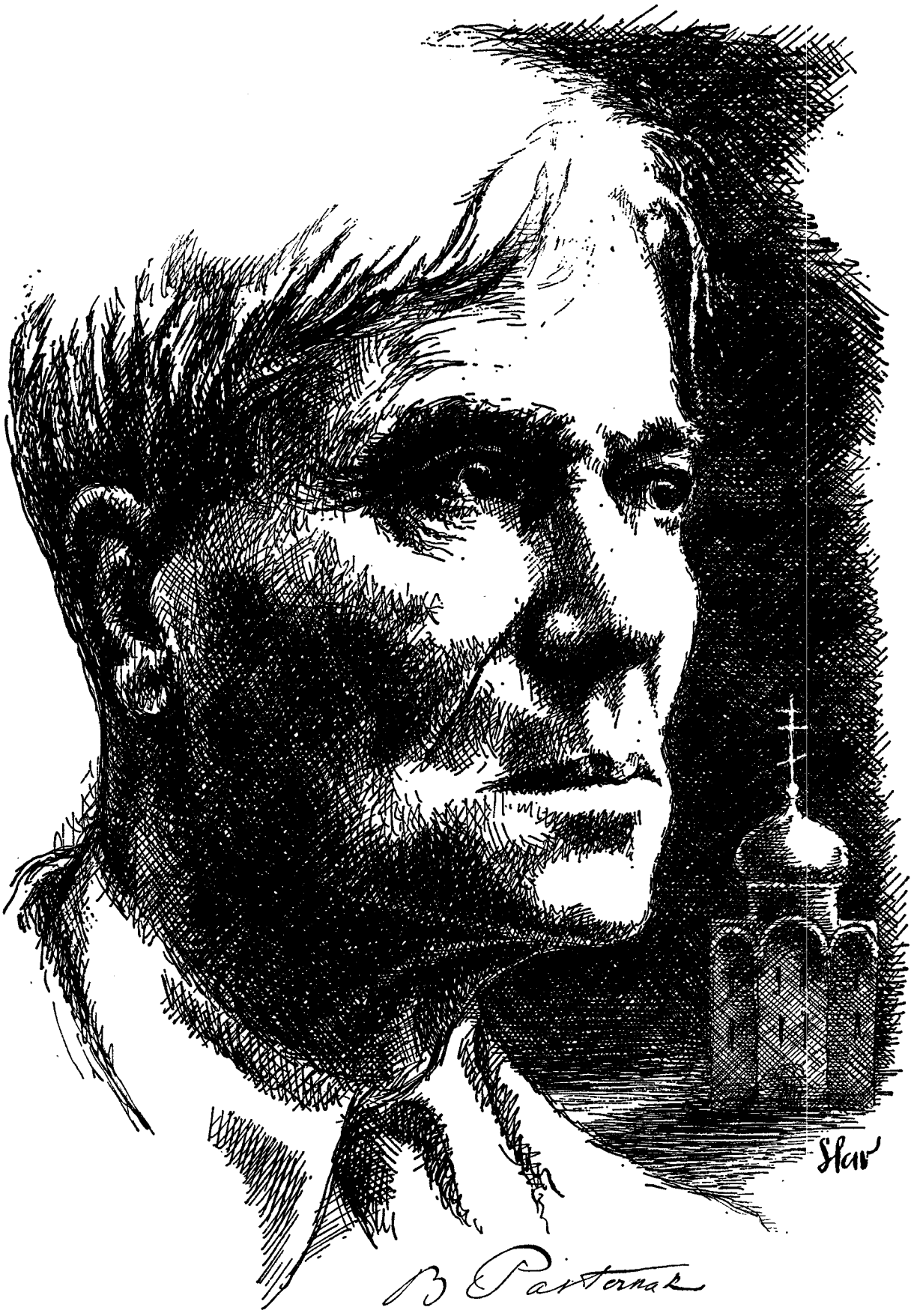

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Boris Pasternak

Dramatic Fragments

PASTERNAK's three little known "Dramatic Fragments" appeared in May and June 1918 in the Socialist Revolutionary newspaper *Znamya Truda* ("Banner of Labour").[1] Directed by the left wing critic and publicist Ivanov-Razumnik, who also edited the magazine *Skify* ("Scythians"), the literary section of the paper had already published verse by Andrey Bely, Sergey Esenin, Nikolay Klyuev and the "Scythian" poets; and Aleksander Blok's celebrated poems "The Scythians" and "The Twelve" had also first appeared on its pages in February and March of 1918. Most of the literary contributions to *Znamya Truda* coincided with the "Scythian" group's interpretation of the events of 1917, welcoming them as that mystical revolution of the spirit long prophesied by Russian messianic thought. Some traces of this brand of ecstatic mystic patriotism might be discerned in the main character's impassioned eulogy of his countrymen in the third "Dramatic Fragment" entitled "Dialogue":

> I love my homeland so... sometimes to the point of madness! In my country that is how all of us love. And what love indeed—for this is the very future of our world! A future which shines through in everything. My countrymen are all men of genius because, like flax, they give up their whole selves, their last fibre, to weave the fabric of this future... But in order to give, to be in a position to give, they also take all that they are able. It turns out that in the state of genius mankind is restoring a proper balance to the shaking, staggering life it leads. The only reason why life in your country is so steady is that it has fallen and lies on the earth, and has not yet risen to its feet.

Although in 1916 he had warned his fellow poets against allowing History to encroach on the virgin territory of pure Lyricism, the impact of the 1917 Revolution could not fail to affect Pasternak's writing. In the poem called "Kremlin in the Snowstorm: End of 1918" he speaks of how the coming year will undertake "to educate me once again," and readers of the novel will recall Yury Zhivago's thrill at the Revolution's "splendid surgery." Nevertheless the reflection of contemporary events in Pasternak's verse and prose nearly always remained oblique and indirect; his view of history was forever a highly subjective and poetic one. Thus in his longer poems of the mid-1920s which were supposed by orthodox critics to mark his gradual emergence on to the "social platform," he preferred to deal with an earlier revolution in "The Year 1905" and with its hero in "Lieutenant Schmidt." And when finally he graduated to 1917 the February and October Revolutions were witnessed through the eyes of Spektorsky (in the poem of that title published in 1931) and Yury Zhivago, as well as directly by the poet himself in "The Lofty Malady" (1928), all of them artistically sensitive but politically inactive intellectuals. Though sympathetic to the revolutionary forces which removed the Tsarist autocracy, none saw themselves able to come to terms with the inexorable logic of the revolutionary order and the new society without doing violence to their individuality and sensitivity.

Although no reader at the time could have failed to see the French Revolution setting of the first two "Dramatic Fragments" as a simple translocation of the Russian revolutionary scene, Pasternak characteristically sets them in the months of Messidor and Thermidor in the French republican year 1794, with Saint-Just expounding Pasternak's own ideas as he speaks in turn with Henriette and Robespierre. The third "Dramatic Fragment" is set in France too, at a more recent though unspecified time and its principal character, an eccentric Russian traveller, also acts as the vehicle for some recognisably Pasternakian thoughts as he replies to a French police interrogation.

[1] The first two "Dramatic Fragments" in blank verse were reprinted in the 1965 Soviet edition of Pasternak's verse; the third, in prose and entitled "Dialogue" has not so far been republished.

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For Pasternak in 1917 and 1918 the Russian Revolution still represented a feat of splendid elemental power and exhilarating spontaneity. The disabusement when these were sacrificed to the barren conformity of later years was yet to come; the Antipov-Strelnikovs had not yet asserted their full control; and the "Dramatic Fragments" contain little of that fatalism and pessimism which marked Pasternak's later attitudes to the Revolution; indeed, if the dating of the first two fragments is correct, they were written in the summer of 1917, before the October Revolution. When Saint-Just stands musing in the first Fragment he therefore speaks of his work almost as of some artistic act of creation, "a flash of ecstasy unleashed upon the years." For man to live in the fullest sense, he says, it is not sufficient to be born and live self-satisfied and unaware. Man must respond actively to his environment; each must create anew the world in which he has his being. But, prefiguring the sacrificial motif of Pasternak's later writings, Saint-Just's creative act is one in which individual initiative is eventually sacrificed. Raskolnikov-like he is carried along and ultimately destroyed by the forces he has unleashed. Though used to leaving on others the "brand-mark of my own self-immolations," Saint-Just himself is engulfed by the consuming flames, and in the second Fragment he faces his end with the calm conviction of one who has written the "chronicle of the republic" with the glory of his last few exalted days on earth.

The setting of the third "Dramatic Fragment" (not published here) is less immediately clear and little effort is made to locate the action precisely in time or space. The principal character is a traveller from Russia arrested in some French town for the theft of a melon and for inflammatory public preaching to a crowd which offered him money. A benign, ingenuous and artistic personality, much given to lyrical digressions and easily distracted by incidental poetic observations, he is uncomprehended by his foreign interrogators as he seeks to justify the theft of the melon by contrasting the French and what he claims is his own, Russian, view of life and material possessions. In an interview with Gerd Ruge in 1958 Pasternak stated:

> Russians have a different attitude to property and possessions. Russians regard themselves as being mere guests in this life. I suppose the truth is that we Russians are more philosophical than the West. (Encounter, March 1958)

And in the "Dialogue" a similar contrast is drawn when the main character discerns in Russians a capacity for intensity of experience, for love of and passionate involvement with life, understood in its most general sense, for which the only word is "genius". Where the observer's personality and awareness of self are lost in the ecstasy of contemplation, absorbed and assimilated, as it were, by the very object contemplated—this is a state in which Pasternak the poet constantly dwelt. Isaiah Berlin writes of his poetry being informed by a "metaphysical emotion which melts the barrier between personal experience and brute creation." And in the dramatic "Dialogue" the Russian traveller also finds that in such a state the "human condition" is no longer something finite and delimited by physical bounds—man is not a mere "place in the total space of humanity" as he is in France. To live in the Russian manner means to exist in a non-physical state of burning and furious spiritual activity. Russian man, we understand, loves, works and lives in a more or less compulsive manner wherever he happens to be—"wherever his inflammable nature meets a spark." But, as with Saint-Just, this Russian creative awareness is acquired only by self-sacrifice, by renouncing any claim to control one's physical destiny, for "man finds himself wherever he is driven by the force which ferments within him, wherever the storm tosses him." It is this which explains the eccentric traveller's strange arrival in France and frank acknowledgement of his misdeeds, Robespierre's sense of despair and Saint-Just's acceptance of the ineluctable historical forces which are to destroy the two of them. In fact the "Dramatic Fragments" are perhaps the first clear forecast in Pasternak's work of the characters and fates of his later heroes, Lieutenant Schmidt, Sergey Spektorsky, and Yuri Zhivago.

If this is the chief interest of the Fragments, there is originality too in Pasternak's very use of dramatic form for this his first work on an overtly historical theme. Apart from his numerous translations of drama by Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Goethe, Schiller, and Kleist, Pasternak used the form only once again at the end of his life in a historical trilogy called "The Blind Beauty" which like the earlier "Dramatic Fragments" has unfortunately survived only as a series of incomplete extracts, posthumously published in 1969.

Christopher Barnes

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I

PARIS. *The apartment of Lebas. The windows are wide open. It is a summer's day, and thunder can be heard in the distance. The action takes place some time between the 10th and 20th messidor (29th June and 8th July) in the year 1794.*

SAINT-JUST: Before us Paris lies, a changing city...
What of its past and future? This broad day
Which lights the world around, like dungeon steps
That form the threshold of my soul, will not
Forever be a stormy lantern flame
That shivers worlds into a fevered order.
This age will pass; the scorching beam will cool,
Turn charcoal-black, and curiosity
One day will pore by candlelight in archives
For works which thrill and dazzle men today.
What passes now for clarity and wisdom
Our grandsons will regard as raving. Gloom and
Obscurity await. Insanity
Will claim our day, our God, all light and reason.
The ages rush and fear to look around.
And why?—That they might see themselves! They don
Night's shroud, while other write their epoch's chronicle—
Snuff out their years to read it in the gloom.
But who has fame as guest within his soul,
Fate guides his eye: he draws the shroud across
His days, himself to write his age's book and
Inscribe therein his own renown and glory.

(*He now addresses Henriette, who sits sewing, and speaks more simply and animatedly*)

Then why should men consider that mere birth
Is warranty for living? Who can prove
This world is like some inn wherein we pay
To rest a while in freedom, comfort, warmth?...
When will they understand that man is nothing
Save the Creator's Sword of Damocles—
Man's soul has no abode but in a world
That he himself has snared and recreated?
But in our towns, Lyon, Bordeaux and Paris
Men crawl like crabs about the ocean bed,
Like hunted tigers louring in the reeds.
Yet reason still can shatter life's dark pane,
Tear idleness in shreds, and by its actions....

HENRIETTE: You say....

SAINT-JUST: I mean that action is a flash
Of ecstasy unleashed upon the years.

HENRIETTE: You go....

SAINT-JUST: To lance the abscess of desires.

HENRIETTE: But when....

SAINT-JUST: To bleed away impurity.

HENRIETTE: I do not understand.

SAINT-JUST: Is it so often
That Paris's linden trees applaud the thunder,
That clouds are wroth and heaven's eyes unsealed

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To blink with lightning glare in showers? Yet
Here storms are rare, here silence reigns and slumber.
You are not always with me here.

HENRIETTE: Not always?
But there?...

SAINT-JUST: Out there? Attacks at every moment....

HENRIETTE: Out there there is....

SAINT-JUST: No Henriette?

HENRIETTE: Yes.

SAINT-JUST: Not so! Out there you're with me constantly!
Believe me, whether you are mine or no,
No matter were your love no match for mine,
But you are there! The towns, the air of battles
All breathe of Henriette and invade
My inmost heart, so none can stand between us,
'Tween you, cloud-wrapped, and my dilated breast,
Between the heavens and my troubled dreaming.
The guardian of the spirit's cause out there
Is Georges Saint-Just, who holds at bay the dragon
Of mediocrity; in here with you
His strength's a hundredfold reduced, in here
That dragon is a hundredfold more dread.

HENRIETTE: What lance out there can probe such ulcers?

SAINT-JUST: Duty,
The soul, the urgency of my commands!
Used as I am to the consuming fire,
Accustomed as I am to leave on men
The brand-mark of my own self-immolations!
Like dark mulled wine, I love the smokeless flame
Of men intoxicated by the glow
Of flaring nerves, of men immersed in thought
Who burn like candle-wicks when dipped in oil.
At night there is no rest for me. I lie here
Dressed.

HENRIETTE: Dressed for burial!

SAINT-JUST: No rest for me
At night! There are no nights! Only the daylight
Glows dimmer now and drearer than before,
As if the sun were breathing on a window
And tracing out the hours across the pane
And staggering in the dizzy heat. For each
New day's still sicker than the last, each night
Still more bewitched; a heat-haze dusts the stubble;
The sunbeams gleam taut-stretched like skins on drums
Of military bands.....

HENRIETTE: How close to me and how familiar
These thoughts! It's true, it's true! Yet still I sleep,
Yet still I eat and drink; I have my senses,
My sanity; the nights do not seem white;
No violet tarnish overcasts the sun.

SAINT-JUST: How can one sleep when a new world is born, when
The silent storm of one's own thoughts is raging?
For then one hears the converse of the peoples
Who use one's head to play some game or sport.
How can one sleep when one's own silent thoughts

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Have set the grasses and the stars aquiver,
Disturbed the rest of birds, that all night long
Their din still rises from the sleepless thickets?
There is no night. The light still lies uncleared,
Forgotten, cooling; yet no sundown comes
To end this painful, long, eternal day.

II

PART *of a scene on the night of the 9th to 10th thermidor, 1794. The interior of the Hotel de Ville, Paris. Off-stage one hears the sound of preparations for the siege, the rumble of guns being wheeled into position, people shouting etc. Coffinhal has just read the decree of the Convention, addressing the audience seated in the boxes as he proclaimed the list of outlaws. The hall of the Hotel de Ville is vacated for a moment and it echoes emptily. The first signs of dawn are glowing on the capitals of the pillars, while the rest of the scene is plunged in gloom. In the centre of the tiled floor stands a large office desk with a candle burning on it. Hanriot is lying on one of the benches in the vestibule. Upstage Coffinhal, Lebas, Couthon, Augustin, Robespierre and others walk about talking among themselves and come up to Hanriot. During the opening scene none of their speech can be heard. Downstage Maximilien Robespierre sits at the desk while Saint-Just paces up and down. Both are silent. There is an atmosphere of alarm and stupefaction.*

ROBESPIERRE: Don't pace so restlessly, Saint-Just! I had
A thought just then!
SAINT-JUST: Oh! I'm disturbing you?

(*Long silence*)

ROBESPIERRE: Tell me, Saint-Just, where did it all take place?—
Versailles, October, August, the Bastille?

(*Saint-Just stops in surprise and looks at Robespierre*)

ROBESPIERRE: Well, are they there?
SAINT-JUST: I cannot hear.
ROBESPIERRE: Saint-Just,
I asked you! I am trying to recall.—
Did Augustin give warning to Duplay?
SAINT-JUST: I do not know.
ROBESPIERRE: You do not know.
Then ask no questions. I cannot collect
My thoughts.—But hark! The chimes! What hour is it?—
I have a plan.—Why are you here?—Away!
Begone! Your presence gnaws me like a dormouse,
And I forget to think.—But still, perhaps
The hour is not too late.—Yes, wait. Please stay.
I'll find some way.—Just now I had the answer!—
Please do not go. I need you.—Curse upon it!
What torment! Who remembers? Who can tell me
What I was thinking of?—I must recall!

(*Silence. Saint-Just walks to and fro*)

ROBESPIERRE: Tread softer, lest they hear. Give me your kerchief.
SAINT-JUST: My kerchief?

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ROBESPIERRE: Yes. I need you. Curse upon it!
No, leave me! We are lost! I cannot think!
No thoughts, a whirlwind rushes through my head!

(*Robespierre beats his forehead with his hand and hoarsely addresses the following words to his head*)

The final hour—this foolish head refuses
To save itself! This wonder-working mind
Shies like a stubborn mare. Bring women, wine!—
What mockery! The so-called "incorrupt"
Robespierre pledged to the cause a head which now
Betrays its master to his murderers!
I dedicated time to it that others
Devote so willingly to hours of passion.
That simpleton Danton could never grasp
My schemes! He never dreamt what barricades
Of concepts I erected, fortresses
Of intellect and reason; mutiny
Of dreams he never knew, nor ecstasy
Of lofty, pure ideas in revolt!
Suppose he was a criminal—what matter?
Danton was sacrificed for me, Robespierre,
And for the honour of this brain, this mind,
The one false god I deigned to recognise.
SAINT-JUST: Robespierre, what troubles you?
ROBESPIERRE: The traitorous
Confusion of this mind enrages me!
I try, yet cannot think. Cold perspiration,
Dry fog and mist are all it will produce.
My throat runs dry. My skull's an aching void,
An emptiness unvisited by thought.
No, thoughts there are! But how can I convey
Their rapid scuttling and their rat-like patter?
There goes a thought!—I chase it.—Gone!—Again
A thought!—But no!—I pounce once more—in vain!
Oh, for a second head! I'd sacrifice
The first together with its wanton thoughts!
SAINT-JUST: Do not torment yourself. Allow your thoughts
To wander. Let them roam unhindered, freed
For one last time.
ROBESPIERRE: No. For the first time! Hence
My anger. What a time to choose! Enough!
No more! My sole recourse is now to yield,
To curse this mind's betrayal and surrender.
SAINT-JUST: Permit your mind just once to roam. You asked
Where did it all occur: October, August,
And June the second....
ROBESPIERRE: (*interrupting, and absorbed in his own thoughts*)
I remember!
SAINT-JUST: Useless!
I thought of that myself.
ROBESPIERRE: (*still absorbed*) For one brief instant
I had it!
SAINT-JUST: Useless! I myself have meanwhile
Explored that question—how it all occurred....

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ROBESPIERRE: (*bitter*) I beg of you! While we have been discussing....
So must it be!...

(*There is a pause in which Coffinhal, Lebas and the others leave, and the upper stage empties except for Hanriot who still lies sleeping*)

ROBESPIERRE: (*hoarsely and in despair*) If only.... Never mind,
Please do continue. You were telling me....
Now all is lost. I said I would surrender.
Please finish. Pardon me. I'm overwrought....

SAINT-JUST: Such words are natural:—when you compare
Me to a mouse, and your own thoughts to rats,
It's true. Your thoughts are scurrying like rats
Trapped in a blazing house. They sense the fire
And raise their snouts before the flames and sniff
The heated air; and yet, not just your brain
Is seething, but the kingdoms of the world
Within throb to the scuttling of those rats,
Those hordes of loathsome thoughts which swarm in frenzy,
Each tainted by the horrid fumes of death.
Not we alone, no, all have known the dread
Realisation. All men have endured
The numbness of their final day and hour.
Yet some, who overcame the infernal din
And brazen uproar, smiled and laid their heads
Triumphantly beneath the guillotine.
And those brief days preceding their demise
Compose the history of our republic.
For no man's end perhaps comes unexpected;
No one is visited unwarned by death.

ROBESPIERRE: (*distractedly*) Where's Augustin?

SAINT-JUST: He's with Couthon.

ROBESPIERRE: With whom?

SAINT-JUST: Couthon.

ROBESPIERRE: But that's no answer. Where's Couthon?

SAINT-JUST: Upstairs. They've gathered in the upper hall.
Now Frenchmen will no longer rack their brains
And question what the morrow holds in store.
All secrets are uncovered. All who passed
Across that square, where mysteries lay revealed
And deaths exhibited, could witness there
The course and outcome of their fates enacted.

ROBESPIERRE: Why such remorse?

SAINT-JUST: No, these are no regrets. But,
The very chronicle of the republic
Recounts the greatness of our dying days.
It seemed the very country kept some journal
Of lives beyond the grave. France was unlit by
The flickering of changing nights and days;
For worlds in revolution, the universe's
Last twilight, death's black occident were France's
Grim sentinels. They stalked our every move....

June–July 1917.

Translated by Christopher Barnes

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Oscar Handlin

The Vulnerability of the American University

A YEAR AGO, when I began to set down these notes on the turmoil in the American universities, I imagined that I would be dealing with a problem that was real but somewhat abstract from a personal point of view. By the time the first draft was complete, the institution within which I had spent my whole academic career was in danger. Returning to the typescript months later, I toyed with the idea of converting this essay into an account of the events at Harvard, not because Harvard was unique but because it was so typical that it exemplified almost every point I wished to make. Ultimately I rejected that temptation, mostly because the struggle to save the University is still in progress. These notes therefore deal in general with a certain type of American university rather than in particular with what occurred at one of them.

Most of the writers about the current disorders have also been participants, involved to a greater or lesser degree in the dramas they described. Accordingly they have also vacillated between emphasis on the particularities which make each situation seem unique and emphasis on the world-wide scope of the outbreaks which lends countenance to theories of universality, inevitability, or conspiracy.

No doubt there are both general and particular elements in the student attacks upon the universities. In so far as they are world-wide, they spring from ubiquitous institutional pressures and from the prevailing disorientation of the age group the university serves. But since there are important national differences both among the systems of higher education and among the young people enrolled in them, the nature of the grievances, the forms of protest, and the consequences of student action vary widely from society to society.

OSCAR HANDLIN *is Professor of American History at Harvard University. He is the author of "The Uprooted" (1951) and "The Americans" (1963), and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1952.*

THE UNIVERSITIES of the United States have experienced the effects of undergraduate unrest just as have their counterparts in other areas of the globe. The intensity of the attack has been a measure of the vulnerability of the American institutions. But that vulnerability had sources that, until now, existed in no other country. The rebels in the United States conformed to none of the special indices described by such analysts of the problem as Professor S. M. Lipset. The American students were not politically active; they lacked an autonomous café culture; and they came from upper- and middle-class families rather than from the ranks of the poor. None of the universities that supplied the chief targets was in a national or state capital; student-faculty relationships in all of them were particularly close; and all could boast of excellent facilities and abundant financial support. The sources of unrest common to other parts of the world were thus not present in the United States. There the vulnerability of the universities was rather the product of the way in which they developed and of the character of their faculties.

That the students of the 1960s "rebelled" was not surprising. They always did, perhaps always should.

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What was surprising was the inner flabbiness of the universities which were unable to contain or direct that rebelliousness. The following elements contributed to the weakness.

(1) *Numbers*

THE PRESS OF NUMBERS. This was always a problem. In 1850, when the United States was still an underdeveloped nation, it had more colleges and universities—of a sort—than all of Europe. Proliferation was, however, far from being a sign of the spread of learning. On the contrary, the unbounded multiplication of these institutions revealed that they had even then assumed some function other than education in its traditional sense. The roster of colleges lengthened steadily in the century after 1850 and even more so in the decades after the second world war. The count stands now at somewhat above 2,500 and present indications are that the growth will continue.

The number of students and of staff has increased correspondingly. In 1870, the country's total college population amounted to about 50,000. In 1920, the size of the student body had grown to about a million and in 1958 to about three million. In 1969 it had swelled to seven million and cautious projections estimated a further rise to nine million in the 1970s. More than 40 per cent of the eligible age group is now enrolled in an institution of higher education and, in the next decade, it is probable that the level will rise to 70 per cent or higher.

Yet though growth was constant and predictable, Americans were never prepared for it. In 1947, a Presidential Commission, regarded as visionary at the time, mentioned with trepidation the prospect that the number of college students *might* rise to four million—the highest figure the imagination could then grasp. The actualities were not even conceivable, although the babies were then already born who would clamour for admission in the 1960s.

Few college administrators in 1947 went even as far as the Commission. The failure to anticipate what would happen was due to an inability to grasp fully the functions the colleges served. Educators persisted in thinking of the university primarily as a vehicle for advancing and communicating scholarship in the arts and the sciences. They refused to acknowledge or failed to take account of the fact that it served two other functions as well. It was a sieve through which a large part of the population passed, to be graded and sorted out *en route* to appropriate places in an increasingly technical economy. At the same time, the college was also a reservoir that withheld unneeded hands from the labour market. Administrators and planners twenty years ago were not in error in projecting only a limited increase in the number of young people who became students in order to seek learning, as then understood. The error lay rather in the failure to recognise the enormous growth in the number who drifted into studenthood because society had no other use for people of their age. The professors, oblivious to what was happening in their classrooms, were even more at fault.

The obligation somehow to find some way to occupy the students who were in the university without knowing why they were there has been a continuing drain upon energy and resources. Among the results of the effort to provide for them has been a corresponding increase in the size of faculties and a tragic dilution in their quality.

(2) *Diversity*

THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF DIVERSITY. American colleges follow no single model. Private institutions, such as Harvard, operate autonomously and subsist on income drawn from tuition, gifts, and endowment. State universities, like California, sustain their multiple campuses and their hundreds of thousands of students from legislative appropriations and are governed by public officials. Large municipal colleges enroll thousands of commuting students; and hundreds of smaller places accommodate the particular groups that support and control them—Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians and numerous other sects, and Negroes. These schools have little more in common than the power to confer degrees and the rivalry for the federal funds that flow from Washington.

Diversity enables the universities to make places for the hordes of students annually swept to their gates from the secondary schools. The 43 per cent of the age group now enrolled differ widely among themselves in social background, in intellectual ability and interest, and in pre-

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paration. The variety of institutions that receive them can take account of those differences while preserving the fiction that the degrees awarded are all identical. A more uniform pattern, on the French model for instance, would be doomed to failure because it would create an intolerable strain on the students.

The weaknesses of the American system in fact emanate from the pretence that all these institutions are the same despite their diversity; and those weaknesses affect alike the colleges, the faculties and the students. Only rarely does a university recognise its own position clearly enough to use its resources effectively. Usually, all aim for the same paraphernalia—campus, professors, library, laboratory, alumni association, colour, song and stadium—just as they bestow the same degrees, whatever the appropriateness to the job they actually do. The faculties too—wherever they are—aspire to the same privileges of tenure, teaching load, and aid to research. And the students, for whom the admission certificate is the badge of transition from adolescent dependence to an undefined freedom, identify college life with maturity. All too often they discover a disappointing discrepancy between the idealised image of what leaving home would be like and the reality they confront. The routine of books and classes is not the real life they envisioned in anticipation. Unoccupied, they feel their powers going to waste and either take refuge in apathy or seethe with discontent.

The frustration of conforming to standards beyond reach breeds a sense of inadequacy that leaves a good many administrators, teachers and students irritably aggrieved. No one measures up: there simply are not that many good colleges, teachers, and students; and primitive selection procedures usually fail to bring the three together.

Faculty resentments are particularly important because they deepen with time. The turnover of students and administrators is relatively rapid. The teachers, even when they move from one institution to another, live with their problems permanently. There are not enough books in the library or machines in the lab; or if there are, there is not enough time for research; or if there is, there are not enough secretaries or programmers. And if everything is at hand, then there is the problem of finding something to say. The pretence that all teachers are creative scholars too often leads into this impasse.

(3) *Scholars & "Standards"*

THE ACADEMIC PROFESSION. From their first foundation in the American colonies, the universities contained some scholars who understood their place in the world of learning. But they were always a minority; teaching on the college (as on the school) level was slow to become a profession in the United States. Through most of the 19th century, it remained generally the refuge of clergymen without parishes, of young men who marked time while they found more desirable openings, or of failures in other callings. Rarely then were scholars willing or able to take posts as teachers. Signs of professionalism first appeared in the 1870s and developed slowly in the next half-century, along with the growth of respect for science and learning. But only within the present generation have academic people shown any sense of strength or self-confidence.

Until recently therefore the professors were on the defensive, disposed to regard their students and society at large as hostile. The dominant concern was to fend off attack. Tenure, the vested right to a teaching post and immunity from dismissal, became the primary—indeed often the sole—concern of the profession. There was never any effort to develop standards of competence or of malpractice; the Ph.D. degree which for a time seemed likely to become the test of qualification was not a reliable criterion and has become ever less so in the past decade.

The consequences were not dangerous when numbers were small. Thirty years ago, when the few hundred historians or economists or political scientists in the country all knew each other personally or through an intermediary, an informal system of evaluation was adequate. It may not always have recognised merit; but at least it provided effective sanctions against delinquency. There are now 15,000 members of the American Historical Association, 16,700 economists, and 15,000 political scientists in the United States; and hundreds of institutions grant advanced degrees in those and other subjects. The department which hires a new member must act on the basis of letters of recommendation, the writers of which it usually does not know; and only long exposure to the stream of such letters will develop an awareness of how often they are written without standards or even honesty or out of a desire to be rid of the character being recommended. Yet once it

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makes the appointment, the department is obliged to retain its new member however unsatisfactory he may prove, unless it can unload him on some other equally unsuspecting institution.

NEVERTHELESS, neither the academic profession as a whole nor any of its constituent organisations has defined the obligations of a professor. More than fifty years ago, the founders of the American Association of University Professors assumed that this would be one of its initial tasks. The task remained unperformed. To this day the Association has not explained what would be a cause for dismissal. In 1967, for instance, while enumerating the rights of students, it warned that disruptions by physical force and denial of the right to speak were "destructive of the pursuit of learning and of a free society." But it was unwilling to affirm that it was improper for faculty members to condone disruptive student action.

As a result, in most institutions there are no professional standards. In the intimate communal life of the small colleges which occupy most of the attention of the American Association of University Professors flagrant misbehaviour is still sometimes penalised. But in the large institutions, administrators and colleagues will go to any length to avoid public exposure which might lead to conflict or scandal. That explains the tolerance of plagiarists, loafers, incompetents, drunkards, drug-takers, lunatics (mild) and promiscuous sexual prowlers. At a moment of crisis the presence of even a few such volatile spirits on a campus has had the most inflammatory results. More important, the absence of an agreed-on code immobilises the decent majority.

(4) *The Professor's Image*

THE SCARS OF DEPENDENCE. Deep, unhealed scars that were the products of decades of neglect prevented American faculties from dealing with their problems intelligently —or at least in a manner that was not manifestly self-defeating. Until the recent past the professor commanded little respect in the United States; at best he won amiable tolerance for his incomprehensible withdrawal from the pursuit of the success his countrymen valued. In the conventional image he, like the minister, was an impractical eccentric—heedless of reality, subject to fits of crankiness and properly held within strict limits by the men who did the world's work. Only the professors with independent wealth or with a genuine dedication to their scholarship escaped the necessity of bowing to this unflattering view of themselves.

As might be expected, the thrill—post-*Sputnik*—of suddenly being desired had a heady effect upon those who had long suffered from neglect. As the Federal money poured in, salaries spiralled upward; the goodies of American society which had long been counted not worth having now were within reach and the professors, jostling at the same trough with the journalist, the press agent and the business man, despised themselves for doing so. Humorists like Peter DeVries, who chronicled the woes of suburbia, now discovered the professor within their sights.

Teaching and scholarship became means toward the end of making it, a transformation which left both winners and losers dissatisfied. Having grabbed his Nobel or Pulitzer, the man who valued the prize rather than the work had to seek other ways of endowing life with purpose or at least with excitement. And those who never carried off a bauble smarted with the consciousness of failure unless they still found their reward in the classroom and the library.

The desire to justify salaries of $25,000 to $35,000 accelerated the trend to specialisation which, of course, also had other sources within the process by which knowledge was everywhere organised. Still, the academic market economy encouraged a high degree of morcellisation. The university which sought a historian or a historian of the United States confronted dozens of potential candidates. But once it focused on "an expert in Reconstruction" (1865–1876) the choice narrowed down nicely, sometimes to a uniquely qualified individual who was therefore worth every penny paid. The additional advantage in departments which numbered their members by the score was to reduce the risk that one would tread in another's field. Good fences make good neighbours. The disadvantage, not so evident at first, grew out of the neglect to inquire whether the man who knew all about Cassius County in the election of 1872, or about fish eyes, or about metal stress, knew anything else.

The manic excitement of the past decade, coming after a much longer period of depression, had a paradoxically frightening effect upon

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faculty members. In many cases, rapid promotion and quick access to high incomes deprived professors of any sense of having earned their status or of the confidence that reliable professional norms would protect them against abuse or the loss of esteem. The *nouveau arrivé* is timid not only out of uncertainty about how to behave but also out of fear that what was so easily bestowed on him might as easily be taken away.

I HAVE IN MIND not so much the actual, and forgivable, cowardice in the face of gun-toting or axe-wielding undergraduates but the morally more outrageous pandering to the prejudices and uninformed views of youth. Every teacher

A Spring Day

New Haven

HEADQUARTERS *of what remains of the New Haven Panther Party is an old three-storey wooden house on Sylvan Avenue at the edge of the Hill Ghetto area. On Thursday afternoon, the Hill, compared to downtown New Haven, was quiet. Downtown, and in the Yale area, all you could hear were the sounds of power-saws and hammers as crews of workmen planked fresh boards across the faces of stores that had waited until the last moment to give in to panic.*

The backyard of the Panther house presented a strange scene. Seven or eight black kids, most of them about seven years old, were digging up part of the yard with small shovels, shovelling the loose dirt into plastic garbage bags, and placing those bags inside rough brown burlap sacks. Helping them dig and tie the filled bags at the top were several Yale students. One of them explained they were sandbagging all the windows of the party headquarters to stop bullets.

About 15 sacks of dirt had been filled and tied when I arrived. The black girls were singing "Old Macdonald," and if the scene were in a propaganda film no one would have believed it. "You know," said one Yalie to another, "doing this feels sort of romantic." Yale students characteristically stand aside and evaluate who they are, what they're doing, and how they feel while they're doing it. I was one; it's hard to escape.

THE PANTHER TALKING *was about 20 and had come to New Haven from Queens to help out the crippled party here. I asked him if he'd known Alex Rackley—the man the police say Bobby Seale ordered executed as an agent. He knew Rackley, he said, and Rackley was "right on." Rackley had told him he was leaving the party's Harlem office to go to New Haven because he didn't want to get busted in connection with the Panther 21 case. "Pigs use an informer for a case, they're through with him, they're not stupid enough to use him again in the next city. He was no informer." I don't think he was lying. The Panthers say that Rackley was "murdered by the pigs." The facts are unclear.*

"The most important thing we've got to convince people of about this trial," Tom Hayden told the rally Saturday, "is that the facts are irrelevant." He meant, I think, that whatever the circumstances of Rackley's death, they are overwhelmed by the enormities of the government's attack upon the Panthers—by larger facts. He may, however, be asking far more for belief: a leap of faith in the Panthers as the revolutionary vanguard. The Old Light Protestants who founded Yale insisted on the primacy of faith over evidence, believed in the resurrection, for instance, not because of facts—the report of the missing body, the shroud, etc. —but because they had had a faith in Christ's immortality first. After Chicago, Baltimore, and now Detroit, it's probably enough to know that the Panthers are very mortal to begin to understand what Hayden was saying.

"EITHER/OR" *is the new Panther support button: black and yellow lettering on yellow and black background. It's a message to the reader: you're either part of the problem or part of the solution; a message to the system: either you free Bobby or else; to the movement: either class war or race war; a message to me: you're either part of the struggle or you're just a writer. Mayday was forcing people to look at themselves in terms of either/or.*

TUESDAY MORNING *two alleged "Weathermen from Boston" were busted in the commune across the street from the house I was staying in. Inside the house Jennifer, grad student, told me she couldn't decide whether to take her poems out to an instructor's suburban home for safekeeping, or to carry them on her person throughout the cataclysmic weekend to come. The first boards were going up; the National Guard began moving into town.*

I hadn't been on the Yale campus since last September, but the only physical change I noticed was the flower beds around Old Campus facing the Green, site of the Mayday rally, were now filled with hundreds of flowers in full bloom. The flowers were, I was told, narcissus. Sometimes metaphors come up and club you over the head.

WHEN I WAS A SENIOR AT YALE, *I went on an intense 17th-century trip, the metaphysicals, the highly sexual Catholic poets, Milton, revolutionary puritanism. I rejected good works for amazing grace, suffered the crisis of the poets during the Revolution. So what? Well, I walked out of the Strike Steering Committee meeting in Dwight Hall and found some black students*

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aware of his own ageing feels a twinge of envy when he surveys the ever-youthful faces before him. But for those who derive no satisfaction from what age has brought, the contrast produces also a desperate will to be liked, a frolicky imitation of student tastes in dress and opinions, a pally eagerness to deny the generation gap by disregarding all differences including those of depth of knowledge and a flaccid acceptance of verbal and physical abuse, under the guise of accommodation. American professors whose relationship to their charges has always been quasi-parental, were particularly susceptible to the wish to be loved; like Mom and Pop they depended upon the approval of the next generation and would go to astounding lengths to

at Yale

talking to reporters in another room. As I walked in one of them was telling NBC that the trouble with Yale is that "Yale disrupts reality. You have people here, they spend all their time studying the years 1650–1660, say, then when something happens in New Haven, they can only relate it to the Protestant uprising. Now where is that?"

LATER THAT DAY *I ran into Rob Wise (real person, false name), an old acquaintance, one of the chief organisers of the Mayday rally. He had entered Yale with me, dropped out, returned, and now, he told me, dropped out for the final time. We talked about the difficulty of organising Yale students around the Panther issue. While male Yale students suffer, they are not oppressed the way the Panthers are oppressed, we agreed. The only way they can relate to the Panthers' condition is through a conscience-machine strapped to their background, but really separate from themselves. There is no sense of self-interest. "They don't say to themselves 'the Panthers' struggle is my struggle,'" he told me. Supporting the Panthers is then a moral duty, not an expression of themselves.*

Rob had been active in radical politics for six years but, he told me, it has been just in the last two months he's discovered what the revolution is about. What it's about, he said is this: an end to the separation of the self and the struggle, an end to making yourself go out and do revolution, and a beginning to living it. He told me that while studying at Yale he had always suffered from a kind of self-hate for not being able to adjust, for preferring activism to study and self-examination. "This year I would sit in those dining halls drinking coffee and watching the cafeteria workers run around serving me. I knew I had to leave." Thinking he was privileged made it impossible for him to realise he could also be oppressed. "Two months ago I joined a collective, and since then I've discovered that revolution is about your own life. I learned I should have hated myself, that I ought to hate the place, I hate it. I'd like to see it ripped down—ripped down in order to build—but first ripped down."

I asked him how he thought he could bring white Yale students to that position. "What I found," he told me, "is that you have to leap into revolution first, maybe your conscience or whatever makes you begin, and only then you discover your own oppression. I went through a difficult time while I was inside Yale. Now I know it's my life, and if I don't win I have nothing." I've known him well enough to see the difference—it's been a real conversion.

I WENT BACK *to the freshman campus to see what was new in soma, and found something far surpassing standard Woodstock fare; Allen Ginsberg chanting Blake. About 10 seconds after I realised what was going on, I also realised that the adrenaline-amphetamine rush of the street action had dissolved. I moved through the seated crowd towards the speakers' platform, noticing that the faces looked ecstatic now, rather than drugged. Ginsberg was singing-chanting "The Echoing Green," one of the "Songs of Innocence." Actually, at the time he seemed to be making a mantra out of the words "echoing green," accompanying himself on what looked like a small accordion while a student standing next to him chanted Om. The harmonies and low vibration from the big speakers on the platform were beautiful. I climbed up on the platform and sat down on it, happily, expecting to rise several feet in the air. I had just begun when someone came up on the stage and whispered to Ginsberg. He stopped singing and said very softly, "Let's all move slowly to the gates now." Outside the freshman quadrangle the police had fired a huge volley of gas to rid the green and the streets around it of all people. The gas rose up and rolled over the wall of dorms facing the green and drifted down on to Allen's audience. We all left quietly.*

THE PANTHERS *weren't particularly happy with their role. They had to escalate their rhetoric to dissociate themselves from the Yale-oriented marshals who told demonstrators "cool it for the Panthers," but really meant "cool it for Yale," the Panthers felt.*

"When the time comes for killing the pigs, the Black Panther Party will deal with the pigs," they told the street fighters. "But you've got to have M-14s, grenades, machine-guns, not rocks and bottles. You got to be ready or the pig will slaughter you first." The Panthers know.

RON ROSENBAUM, *in the Left-wing New York weekly,* **The Village Voice**

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win it. In the 1960s, the lust for popularity—there all along—rose to fever heat from the additional stimulus of the substantial rewards to be gained from making good.

At the moment the willingness to be guided by student views nurtures the infantile leftism also fashionable among other newly affluent groups in American society. Not that there is more than a handful of genuine Marxists or Maoists on American campuses. The prevailing sentiment is without intellectual content. A distinguished social scientist, chairman of a major department in a major university, expressed its spirit when he apologised publicly to students who ascribed his slowness in making concessions to his hostility to radicalism: "... I cannot believe that I want to suppress radical views. Not that I can claim to be a radical, but because I am just not political enough to be credited with that motive and, in so far as I am political, I am—sort of automatically and not very reflectively—on the left...."

In so far as it contains any common element other than the desire to escape student fury by anticipating demands, faculty leftism generally coagulates around aversion to the use of police power. The *New York Times Magazine* symposium in April 1969 was representative. The learned participants shuddered in unison at the prospect of a uniform on campus. *Never?* Not quite, but only as a last resort! But when is that? Well, for instance, if there was a prospect that a building would be blown up with the probability of loss of life, but even then only after all other expedients had failed.

Let us pass by the serene assumption that the police would be willing to wait that long and to go in under those conditions. Let us regard instead the moral consequences of this "non-violent" posture. First, the argument against potential violence by the police called to protect the university becomes a defence of the violence of the extremists bent on destroying the university. Certainly committees have deplored and administrators have sternly warned—about next times. But in the last five years these gentle admonitions have not in the least deterred the tiny minority of determined extremists and they have left helpless the much larger numbers who wished to pursue their studies without interruption as well as the vast majority who were uncertain about their purpose in college.

Second, the "non-violent" position makes a choice of life over property—at any rate, that is the glib, self-satisfied claim made for it. In this case, of course, the property consists of libraries, museums, laboratories and the apparatus that makes learning possible—the repositories, that is, of man's spiritual heritage, assembled through generations of effort. The buildings of the university are property but they are also a "temple of the intellect," dedicated to rationality and truth. By some standards—those of Unamuno at Valladolid, for instance—its "sacred precincts" were worth fighting for, dying for.

However, the turtle-necked worshippers of the young, avid for popularity, find it far more comfortable to evade such issues, to cover up fires in the libraries, vandalism in the museums, damage to research. They see love in the eyes of the Visigoths who storm through their offices. To act otherwise would jeopardise the gains so recently made, the pleasures so little enjoyed. Accommodate! Better to yield a little here, give away a little there. It can't be called rape so long as the victim yells loudly enough that he likes it.

(5) *The Array of Promissory Notes*

THE BURDENS OF UTILITY. It is an ancient weakness of the American university that its faculties, lacking confidence in the value of what they were doing, justified themselves to an unintellectual public by protestations of immediate utility. The result was a persistent disorientation: the university was diverted from the tasks it could perform to those beyond its capacity and society was repeatedly disappointed by the failure to fulfil wildly extravagant promises.

The reverend chaplain of Yale University, writing appropriately for *Playboy*, recently criticised professors who "for too long have dug ivory cellars in the ruins of the past. Too many have spent endless hours shedding light on what is finally not worth illuminating." He equated scholarship with a "refusal to be ethically responsive or discriminating," which in turn he linked to "America's present rapid progress down the road to moral oblivion." This barbaric yawp has reverberated in America down through the centuries, ever since Mr. William Sloane Coffin's predecessor at Yale in the 1760s attempted to persuade the hard-fisted Connecticut farmers to loosen their purse

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strings with the promise that the University could apply the principles of mechanical philosophy to the improvement of agriculture for the public good.

Far from being cloistered or remote from everyday life, the universities of the United States have always suffered from the compulsion to demonstrate their utility to taxpayers or donors. Rarely was a professor in a position to argue that his scholarship had value for its own sake, only that it was instrumental to some other more comprehensible purpose. The university (as administrators were fond of arguing) was a service station to which society could bring all its problems for solution. Hence the vast mushrooming of activities and courses of study characteristic of American institutions of higher education.

That the universities survived and managed to preserve a humane and scholarly ingredient in their operations while carrying these burdens offers no assurance that they will continue to do so in the future. Intellectual resources already attenuated and faculties already weakened may not be adequate to the continuing strain.

The puddling out of activity in every direction has swept into the ranks of the professoriate a variety of types who have little sense of identity apart from the common source of their salaries. Some innocents, still thinking of a traditional European academic setting, may yet worry about two or three cultures; but the actuality which incorporates teachers of gymnastics and typing, of domestic science and nursing, of hotel management and animal husbandry, along with politicians out of office, journalists in search of a live audience, and bureaucrats and technicians is far more complex. The development by now has gone so far as to blur altogether the sense of the university as a unique undertaking dedicated to scholarly ends and values of its own.

It was perhaps symbolic that one of the most atrocious incidents of the Spring of 1969 came at Cornell where the threats of Black students to destroy the University forced a panicked faculty to yield to their demands. Ezra Cornell, after all, had provided an endowment to create "an institution where any person can find instruction in any study...." The old gentleman was never clear in his own thinking what kind of institution that would be; but such mindless good intentions as his left a heritage of indiscriminate expansion within which any kind of study seemed as appropriate as any other.

The process of making the university useful by adding to its tasks continued relentlessly and still shows no sign of slackening. As the percentage of the age group hastening towards degrees of some sort increases, the need for providing some activity for all of them will no doubt crowd scholarship and learning to the periphery. The question is whether any place will remain at all for academic concerns, for the effort to uncover the truth and make it known.

Excessive popular expectations of what the university can do are even more dangerous. Decades of rhetoric have left outstanding an imposing array of promissory notes—to solve the problems of disease and poverty, of scarcity and war, of race and old age, that is, of advancing American man towards his birthright of happiness. It may well be that at the point at

Niceties at Columbia

New York City

THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS *was filled yesterday with hundreds of students blocking doorways and chanting, "On Strike! Shut it down!" but there were hundreds of others, both teachers and students, who held classes anyway. Dr. Andrew Cordier, president of Columbia, expected classes to resume yesterday [7 May], but the students began barricading classroom buildings and turning away professors and students alike.*

One teacher who tried to get in was Dr. Isador I. Rabi, a Nobel Prize winner who retired three years ago as a University Professor. Yesterday he walked to the front entrance of the Pupin Physics Laboratories and was blocked by a group of young men with arms linked across the door.

Dr. Rabi tried to argue with them unsuccessfully. Exasperated, tears in his eyes, he tapped his cane on the granite step and said: "What you are doing is wrong, and you are crazy. You are blocking my way. Do you want to fight with me? Would you fight with me?"

He took hold of a long-haired boy's arm and pulled him towards the sidewalk, where a group of 20 other students, who looked amused, were watching.

The youth declined to fight, and a moment later, he stepped aside to let a workman enter the building. Dr. Rabi sneaked in too, although those at the door tried to push him back out.

Alexander Alland, Jr., an assistant professor, told his undergraduate anthropology students, meeting under a maple tree outside the physics laboratories, "It's silly for us to be here arguing about niceties like grades when there is work for peace to be done." NEW YORK TIMES

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which people cease to think of happiness as a pursuit and demand it as a prize the burden of making the world perfect will prove too much for the university to bear.

Particularly if by then the university has become a partisan tool! After all, Yale's Mr. Coffin has in mind not only involvement in general but an involvement on the right side, that is, one responsive to his particular ethic. Scholars must not simply study war and race, but must act against Viet Nam and for integration.

Now it may be that in the future the greater battalions will more often be on the side of the angels than they have been in the past. The historical record is by no means encouraging in this respect. But the evidence is already clear that to the extent that faculties become embroiled in political controversy they lose the capacity for detachment, for independence and for rational judgment. Their members are, alas, in their roles as citizens no freer from prejudice, emotion and self-interest than other men. And to the extent that they yield to the argument that they must make themselves useful as partisans, they are swept along by the heterogeneous armies of the young toward destinations which none of them foresee. In the process the faculties lose control of their own institutions, and their ability to direct students toward the goals of rationality and knowledge vanishes.

Dew Flower and Star

now the moth draws
strings across water
—the surface dies
dew flower and star

on the banks of the mooi and the river at umkomaas
over the swimming pools at rosebank and houghton
over the slopes of the transkei
over maritzburg on the plain
over howick (like the froth off a star)
over the rusted banks of traffic in the northern suburbs
over haartebeest poort dam
in the slamming of a car door
—surfaces less clear
(firefly across hardboard)
are held in silver pylons
dew flower and star
allemastig
in the turning of a page (less circumstance)
vreilig, soekie
lying on our sides, smoking like etna
(on the lake
each tremble
opens like a window to the knee)

Warwick Collins

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Robin Fox

The Cultural Animal

PRIMITIVE MYTHOLOGIES testify to the enduring fascination of Man with the problem of his own relationship to the natural world. For *Homo* is burdened with being *sapiens*, and one thing this *sapientia* drives him to is a ceaseless and almost passionate enquiry about his status—what T. H. Huxley aptly called *An Enquiry Into Man's Place in Nature*. And like Darwin and Huxley, the primitive seeks an answer to the eternal paradox: We are obviously part of nature, and in particular we are part of the animal world, and yet we are set apart from nature by the very fact of knowing that we are part of it. Not only does no other animal know it is going to die, but no other animal knows it is alive—in any sense in which we would normally use the word "know." And no other animal concerns itself with the problem of its own uniqueness. But Man is obsessed with it. He is forever seeking to define himself—a task as yet uncompleted—and to do so he has to establish the boundaries between himself and the animal world. In their mythologies the primitives solve the problem in various ways—most usually by having man descend from various animal ancestors. We might like to think that this represents an anticipation of Darwin, but unfortunately most primitives believe in acts of special creation, so we have to disqualify them. One of these acts of creation, however, is usually the clue to the essential difference: it is language, fire, the art of cooking, rules about incest, etc., that are the diacritics of humanity. We do not communicate, convert energy, eat, or breed quite like the animals, and hence we make that crucial breakthrough from Nature to Culture, and become the Cultural Animal.

But not only do we become cultural, we become divine. In many of our ego-boosting mythologies we do not differ simply in degree from the animals, we differ in kind. It is not some simple attribute—like the ability to make fire—but the possession of a divine spark that renders us *in essence* different, that carves out a gulf between us and "brute creation." Here again we can't seem to settle the matter, and much argument, as we know, ensues about where brute creation stops and the divine human starts. Any human group is ever ready to consign another recognisably different human group to the other side of the boundary. It is not enough to possess culture to be fully human, you have to possess *our* culture. Even universalistic religions which were happy to define man as an animal with a soul, were often not too sure by what criterion one recognised the possession of this *anima*, and categories of *Homo sylvestris* and *Homo feralis* were invented to take care of marginal cases. But at least in the Western world this definition sufficed (and for many still suffices) until the 18th century began to look down on such arguments as perhaps too "emotional," and substituted "Reason" as the defining characteristic of Man. Linnaeus, to whom we owe our pretentious zoological title, was very much a child of the 18th century. Souls were not to be trusted, it seems, since one never knew quite what they were up to, and animals may very well have them. But

TWO YOUNG SCHOLARS—*dramatically named Tiger and Fox—have been revolutionising the study of animal and human behaviour.* ENCOUNTER *readers will be familiar with the views of Lionel Tiger (see "The Dangers of Finding Something Out," in* ENCOUNTER, *December 1969) and his recent book entitled "Men in Groups" has been leaving its mark in all circles of anthropology and sociology. In this article, his colleague Robin Fox, who is Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University, sets out his own views of the new issues—which have been agitating writers like Lorenz, Koestler, Ardrey, Desmond Morris, George Steiner (see his "Language Animal" in* ENCOUNTER, *August 1969)—against the whole intellectual background of modern social science. Fox (who is 35; Tiger is 33) was born in England, educated in Yorkshire and graduated from the University of London.*

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brute creation did not have reason and that was obvious enough. Soulful our furry friends may be, but rational they were not. They could probably adore God, but they couldn't understand Pythagoras.

DARWIN UNDERMINED this stance as much as the position of the religiously orthodox. He noted what in fact many predecessors, including Linnaeus himself, and even Immanuel Kant, had noted, and that was the striking anatomical similarity between ourselves and the rest of the order *Primates*—and ultimately between ourselves and the rest of the vertebrates. What he added was a theory that could explain how this striking relationship came about, other than by some whim of the Almighty or Lamarckian effort of will. Now this caused many people other than Bishop Wilberforce to feel that human dignity and uniqueness were in danger. That great anti-cleric Samuel Butler castigated Darwin for "banishing mind from the universe." He had blurred the distinctions that we had assumed were inviolable. We had emerged gradually from the animal world by a natural process, not suddenly by a supernatural one. The moral was plain to the soul merchants and the reason merchants alike: we in fact differed only in degree and not in kind from our cousins. The reaction was interesting. The anatomical argument was quickly adopted and became its own kind of orthodoxy. Despite a few skirmishes the battle was over before it was fought. The anatomist Le Gros Clark could say recently that it is astonishing to think people ever doubted the anatomical continuity between ourselves and the other primates. And indeed it does seem absurd today—to the extent that when I am faced with an unrepentant fundamentalist I confess I am unable to cope with him. I have no ready-made arguments for defending the self-evident and so fare badly, thus confirming his worst fears about the conspiracy of the ungodly. In the 100 years between the appearance of *The Origin of Species* and today, a large (although still too limited) amount of fossil evidence has come to light documenting the gradual transition that Darwin saw *must* have happened, even in the absence of direct evidence. As far as anatomy was concerned then, the case rested. But human behaviour was somehow exempted from the same rubric.

Darwin published in 1873 his most remarkable work, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Whatever we may think of his specific conclusions, his message was clear enough: in many areas of behaviour we show great similarities to our cousins; their behaviour, like their anatomy, has evolved through the process of natural selection, ergo, so has ours. Anatomy and behaviour, structure and function, were of course intimately linked, and what was true for one was true for the other.

Even in the biological sciences, the impact of this line of thinking was not immediate, and it is only comparatively recently that biologists have been investigating in a serious way the evolution of animal behaviour systems. The reasons for this are not my concern here, although the historians of science should be working on them. But one reason we should note: investigations of animal behaviour really got going under the aegis of Pavlovian-style behaviourism, which is not evolutionary in orientation, and has scant respect for anything that is claimed to be "innate." A similar reaction (or was it even a reaction?) happened in the social sciences. Darwin had blurred the distinctions all right, and even "reason" did not appear to be so firmly enthroned now; so Anthropology took on the role of Defender of the Faith in human uniqueness and weighed in with "culture" as the defining characteristic. Of course, as with their predecessors, they were never able to define what this was very clearly.

SO AS IN THE OLDER MYTHS of those other primitives, the nature of our uniqueness remains something of a mystery. Very roughly, "culture," in anthropological parlance, refers to traditional modes of behaving and thinking that are passed on from one generation to another by social learning of one kind and another. We get a little uneasy when told that animal communities also have "traditions" that get passed on, so we retreat into "symbols." Culture is couched in symbols and it is by means of these that it is passed on. Pre-eminent among the symbol systems is language—and when all else fails we can cling to language. "By their speech shall ye know them."

The Constants & the Variables

THE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL sciences side-stepped Darwin's challenge. This manoeuvre was aided by a number of developments. Behaviourism dominated psychology, and "instinct theory" fell into disrepute. Behaviourism was rigorous and "scientific" while instinct theory (primarily under McDougal) seemed nothing more than a kind of thesaurus of human attributes. The eugenics movement which put such store in "biological" aspects of behaviour became more and more entangled with racism, and any attempt to show that there were important biological components in behaviour was regarded as incipient racism, and

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still is in many quarters. In sociology, the "social Darwinists" also fell into disrepute. They were not really Darwinians in the sense in which I am using the term; they simply used analogies from Darwinian biological theory and applied them, usually wrongly, to social processes. Their wrong-headed use of evolutionary doctrines to support the excesses of *laissez-faire* capitalism eventually sent them into oblivion. With them, the proverbial baby went out with the proverbial bath-water.

Henceforth, any explanation of a social phenomenon that was "Darwinian" or "biological" was *ipso facto* erroneous in the social sciences, and that was that. Marx and Durkheim dominated sociology, and while the latter had problems with the autonomy of the subject his doctrine that the social must be explained in terms of the social and not "reduced" to any lower level—like the biological, of course—held almost complete sway. Anthropologists continued to pronounce. Sir Arthur Keith[1] even set a limit below which culture was impossible. The brain, he said, had to reach a size of 750 cubic centimetres before any fossil primate could be considered a "man." This gave substance to the anthropological belief that culture was (in the words of Malinowski) "all of a piece." One never found people with religion but no language, or law but no religion, and so on. If you had one you had all, and it must have happened at that point when the brain reached the size necessary for culture to "occur." One can immediately see the similarities between this and the Catholic doctrine as enunciated in the encyclical *Humani generis* where it is allowed that man may have evolved in body *à la* Darwin, but insisted that at some point an immortal soul was injected into the painfully evolving body. God would have had to wait, it seems, until his chosen primate had crossed Keith's "Cerebral Rubicon" before doing anything so presumptuous.

Anthropologists also were almost manically preoccupied with explaining cultural differences. They were really not very interested in what made men, but in what made one lot of men different from another lot. As a young student I had the litany chanted at me: "biological universals cannot explain cultural differentials. . . ." And of course at one level they cannot. Muslims, I was told, take off their shoes to go into church while Christians take off their hats. Now find a biological explanation for *that*! I was never sure I wanted to find any kind of explanation for it: it seemed to me an arbitrary thing. And anyway, what explanation was I offered? I will not bore you with the answer since I do not want to shake your faith in anthropology too much. But I will confess that even in those salad days I was plagued by the question: If we do not really know what biological universals there are, then how can we study the cultural differentials in the first place? How to study the variables without the constants? In response, I was told that biological universals were simply primitive drives like Hunger and Sex. The fact that Sex was universal didn't explain why some cultures were polygamous and others monogamous. Maybe not, I thought, but it might explain why they were all adulterous. After all, sex is a very complex affair, and might it not be that behaviour resulting from it was more than just these rather grey and amorphous urges that I was presented with? Look at the courtship of birds and animals, for example. Ah, came back the answer, but that is *genetic*, whereas human courtship is *cultural*.

When all this was going on—some 15 years ago in London—I had no ready answer: anyway, I wanted to pass my exams. It all depends, I thought to myself (and in secret), what you want to explain. All human cultures have some kind of courtship ceremonies, and when you look at them they look very much alike despite the different cultural trappings. If all you want to explain is why in America girls wear their dates' fraternity pins while in Fiji they put hibiscus flowers behind their ears, then that's fine. But (*1*) it doesn't seem worth explaining, and (*2*) there probably is no "explanation" in any scientific sense: it is just what they do. These are simply ways of getting the same courtship job done, and the interesting thing to me is the universality of various similar symbolic devices. Has each culture independently invented the idea that the girl should declare her allegiance in this kind of way? Or is there perhaps something more subtle about courtship than we imagined, something uncultural, unlearned?

To be fair to anthropology, it was fighting on several fronts and often shot at the wrong targets. The "no-links-between-Biology-and-Culture" argument was partly an attack on the racists who wanted to explain seeming inequalities between cultures as a result of biological differences. Again the baby went out with the soap suds when anthropology strenuously set its face against *any* connection between culture and biology, even at the universal level. At best, as for example in the work of Malinowski, cultures could be seen as a response to a rather drab set of "biological imperatives"—

[1] Sir A. Keith, *A New Theory of Human Evolution*. Watts & Co. (1948).

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but then this kind of Malinowskian functionalism soon fell into disrepute as well since it did nothing to explain cultural differences. While I am on with my catalogue of complaints, let me add that as far as I could see, for all its obsession with cultural differences, anthropology in fact did nothing to *explain* them. What it did was to take cultural differences as *given* and use them to explain other phenomena—largely other cultural differences. All the things that might have explained cultural differences—such as racial variation, environment, history diffusion, etc.—were at one time or another ruled out of court.

All in all then, for a variety of ideological reasons, the anthropological profession—along with psychology and sociology—kept the world safe for humanity by refusing to allow that anything about culture could be "reduced" to biology, and hence keeping the gap between us and the brutes nicely wide. We were the "cultural animal" all right, but stress was entirely on the *cultural* while the animal was relegated to a few odd things like blinking, sucking, feeling hungry, copulating. Ninety-nine per cent of our behaviour, it was held, was "learned" and hence cultural. And, what was more, there was no limit to what could be learned. The human infant was a *tabula rasa* on which culture imprinted itself, and the subsequent behaviour of the infant was therefore wholly a matter of which particular culture had been imprinted on it. The differences between cultures in their beliefs, behaviours and institutions were so great that any considerations of common biological traits were totally irrelevant.

Ethnographic Dazzle

WE GET THEN to the crux of what I want to say, by raising the question: Were not anthropologists suffering from ethnographic dazzle? I borrow the term from linguistics where "orthographic dazzle" refers to the difficulty some people have of sorting out pronunciation from spelling. In some respects and at some levels—the levels of belief, of formal institutions—cultures are dazzlingly different. Why are the Japanese the way they are, as opposed to the Americans, the Russians, or the Hottentots? This is a fascinating question. But as I have said, the anthropological answer is a rather lame "they are different because they do things differently...." Anthropology mostly tells us about the *consequences* of doing things differently, and tells it very well indeed. But are societies and cultures really very different at the level of forms and processes? Or are they not in some ways depressingly the same? Do we not time after time in society after society come up with the same processes carried out under a variety of symbolic disguises? I think we do, and I think if we can get past the cultural or ethnographic dazzle we can see that this is so.

Thus, if one looks at the behaviour of what my colleague Lionel Tiger[2] has called *Men in Groups*, one finds that whatever the overt cultural behaviour at the level of symbolism, actual practices and beliefs, and even emotional and other expressive features, in society after society one thing stands out: men form themselves into associations from which they exclude women. These associations vary in their expressed purposes but in many of their processes they are remarkably uniform. A seemingly bewildering variety of male behaviour can be reduced in effect to a few principles once this is grasped. Similarly, I have tried to show that the seemingly endless variety of kinship and marriage arrangements known to man are in fact variations on a few simple themes. The same can be said of political arrangements which, despite their cultural variety, are reducible to a few structural forms. Once one gets behind the surface manifestations, the uniformity of human behaviour and of human social arrangements is remarkable.

None of this should surprise a behavioural zoologist: we are after all dealing with a uniform species divided into a number of populations. This being a species of rather highly developed mammals one would expect a lot of local differences in "traditions" between the various populations, but one would expect these differences to reflect species-specific "units" of behaviour. Thus, every species has a complex of social behaviour made up of recognisable units—a complex which distinguishes it from other species—but these units may well be put together in different ways by different populations adapting to different environments. But one does not find a baboon troop, for all its ingenuity, adapting like a herd of horses (and *vice versa*). The baboons can only adapt with the material to hand, in their stock of behaviour units—the same is true of man. The degree of flexibility in human populations is obviously greater, but a great deal of it is at the symbolic level. We can tell the story in many different ways, but it is the same old story we are telling. And if we depart too far from the plot—which we have the capacity to do—the result may well be a truly dramatic chaos. For this is man's hang-up. Unlike the baboon or the horse we can imagine things that are different from the plot laid down for us, and we can put our

[2] Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups*. London: Nelson; New York: Random House.

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dreams into practice. The question then is: Will the dream work?

IF YOU ACCEPT that all behaviour is culturally learned and that man can learn anything, then the answer is: Yes... the only limit is human ingenuity... we can invent any kind of society and culture for ourselves. If you believe—as by now it should be obvious I do—that we have a species-specific repertoire of behaviour that can only be combined in certain ways with success, then the answer is: No, there are definite limits to what this animal can do, to the kind of societies it can operate, to the kind of cultures it can live with. But there is no end to its dreams and its fantasies. While its social behaviour may have strict limits, its imagination has none.

Towards a Grammar of Behaviour

I HAVE JUMPED HERE to my conclusion without detailing the whole route. Let me postpone the latter for a little while longer to press home this point. I mentioned earlier that language was the chief characteristic of our species, the crucial distinguishing feature. This is true and can be used to illustrate the point.

It is now well established that the capacity for language acquisition and use lies in the brain on the one hand and in the speech organs on the other, and overall in the complex relations between the two. Linguists like Chomsky, and psychologists like Lenneberg,[3] argue that the capacity for grammatical speech is somehow "in" the brain and matures as the child matures. Thus every human child has the capacity for grammatical speech, and is ready, as it were, to be "programmed" with whatever actual grammar its culture provides. Now we know that the latter are many and various and astonishing in their variety, and that their variation is arbitrary. There is no "explanation" why the English say *"horse,"* the French *"cheval"* and the Germans *"pferd."* There is no "explanation" why any particular pattern of sounds signifies an object or action (with the possible exception of onomatopoeia). This is quite arbitrary. Nevertheless, the speech patterns of all languages are known to operate on a few basic principles which linguistics have worked out, and the semantic patterns may well also be reducible in this way once what Chomsky calls the "deep structures" of all languages are known. Once these are discovered, then we can write the "Universal Grammar" which will tell us the few principles upon which all actual grammars rest. We can do this because despite the enormous variety of "surface grammars" they all are doing the same job and are constrained to do it in a limited number of ways. Thus no language exists that a linguist cannot record with the universal phonetic alphabet in the first place, and analyse with universally applicable techniques of semantic analysis in the second. We can invent artificial languages based on binary signals, or other codes, which require different "grammars"; but "natural languages" all can be broken down first into phones, then phonemes, then morphemes, then lexemes, and so on up to the higher levels of grammaticality.

What I am suggesting is that the rest of culture is probably like this. The potential for it lies in the biology of the species—we have the kinds of cultures and societies we have because we are the kind of species we are; they are built out of our behavioural repertoire and are analysable into its elements and their combinations. Like language, the capacity for specific kinds of behaviour is in us, but exactly how this will be manifested will depend on the information fed into the system. The system here is the behaviour potential of the individual; the information is the culture he is socialised in. But in the same way as he can only learn a language that follows the "normal" rules of grammaticality for human languages, so he can only learn a grammar of behaviour that follows the parallel rules in the behavioural sphere. Of course in either case you can try departing from normal grammaticality, but in either case you will then get gibberish, linguistic or behavioural. With language by and large we don't try to manipulate because the matter is out of our hands. But with behaviour we are continually producing gibbering illiterates, and until we understand the deep structure of the behavioural grammar within which we weave our cultural variations, we will continue to do so. No one wants to produce linguistic gibberish since verbal communication breaks down; but we constantly produce behavioural gibberish and then wonder why social communication breaks down. The answer of those who believe that anything is possible since everything is cultural is—Try to invent yet more and more different languages with any kind of grammaticality you can think of. My answer is: Find out how the universal grammar works and then ring your changes within that framework; invent new behavioural languages that

[3] Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*; The Hague: Mouton & Co. (1957). *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*; The Hague: Mouton & Co. (1964). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*; Cambridge: MIT Press (1965). E. H. Lenneberg, *Biological Foundations of Language*; New York: John Wiley & Sons (1967).

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do not violate the principles of basic grammaticality.

LET ME TRY YOUR patience with this metaphor a little further. At least two monarchs in history are said to have tried the experiment of isolating children at birth and keeping them isolated through childhood to see if they would spontaneously produce a language when they matured. The Egyptian Psammetichos, in the 7th century B.C., and later James IV of Scotland in the 15th century A.D., both, it seemed, did not doubt that untutored children would speak (although King James' hope that they would speak Hebrew was perhaps a little optimistic). I do not doubt either that they *could* speak, or that, theoretically, given time, they or their offspring would invent and develop a language despite their never having been taught one. More than that, this language, although totally different from any known to us, would be analysable by linguists on the same basis as other languages, and translatable into all known languages.

I would go further. If our new Adam and Eve could survive and breed—still in total isolation from any cultural influences—then eventually they would produce a society which would have laws about property, rules about incest and marriage, customs of taboo and avoidance, methods of settling disputes with a minimum of bloodshed, beliefs about the supernatural and practices relating to it, a system of social status and methods of indicating it, initiation ceremonies for young men, courtship practices including the adornment of females, systems of symbolic body adornment generally, certain activities and associations set aside for men from which women were excluded, gambling of some kind, a tool- and weapon-making industry, myths and legends, dancing, adultery, and various doses of homicide, suicide, homosexuality, schizophrenia, psychosis, and neuroses, and various practitioners to take advantage of, or cure, these, depending on how they are viewed. One could go on and extend the list, but it will do as a start.

What I am saying is that they would not only produce (as our monarchs suspected) a recognisable human language, but a recognisable human culture and society. It may not be in content quite like any we have come across: its religious beliefs may be different, but it would have some; its marriage rules may be unique (I doubt it) but it would have them and their type would be recognised; its status structure may be based on an odd criterion, but there would be one; its initiation ceremonies may be unbelievably grotesque but they would exist; its use or treatment of schizophrenia may be bizarre, but there it would be. All these things would be there because we are the kind of animal that does these kinds of things. In the same way, one can raise in a zoo infant baboons who know nothing of the state in which their ancestors and wild cousins lived, and yet when they reach maturity in the zoo produce a social structure with all the elements found in the wilds and of which they have no experience. Their capacity to produce a unique "language" is of course much more limited than that of our naïve group of humans, but in both cases the basic grammaticality of behaviour will be operative. In the same way that a linguist could take our Garden of Eden tribe and analyse its totally unique language, so an anthropologist would be able to analyse its totally unique kinship system or mythology or whatever—because the basic rules of the universal grammar would be operating.[4]

WHAT I AM SAYING about our human tribe developed *de novo* in our experimental Eden may not seem very remarkable but it goes against the grain of the anthropological orthodoxy. Without any exposure to cultural traditions our tribe would develop *very specific* and highly complex patterns of behaviour, and probably very quickly—a matter of a few generations once they had got a language going. They would do so for the same reason that the baboons produce a baboon social system in captivity—because it is in the beast. And it is not just a very general capacity that is in the beast—not just the capacity to learn, and to learn easily—which is all the culturalists need to assume; it is the capacity to learn some things rather than others, and to learn some things easily rather than others, and to learn some rather specific things into the bargain.

This is, I think, an important point. I am not positing that initiation ceremonies or male

[4] Actually in the interests of accuracy I should add a rider here to the effect that the experiment might be impossible to perform. It is one of the ground rules of the universal behavioural grammar of all primates—not just humans—that if you take young infants away from maternal care at a critical period then they will grow up to be very disturbed indeed and may well perpetuate this error by maltreating their own children in turn. Thus our experiment may well produce a group of very maladjusted adults and the whole thing founders rather quickly. But at least this gives us one element of the universal system: some method has to be found of associating mother and child closely and safely during certain critical periods. Not only can the animal not learn any *thing* at all, it cannot learn any *time* at all. It has to learn certain things at certain times—and this is true of language as of many other areas of behaviour.

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rituals are "instinctive" in any old sense of that term. They are an outcome of the biology of the animal because it is programmed to behave in certain ways that will produce these phenomena given a certain input of information. If this input does not occur then the behaviour will not occur or will only occur in a modified or distorted form.[5] What I am trying to say is that the human organism is like a computer which is set up or "wired" in a particular way. It is thus in a state of readiness—at various points in the life cycle—to process certain kinds of information. The information has to be of a certain type, but the actual "message" can vary a lot. If the information is received, then the computer stores it and uses it to go on to the next task. If you confuse the system then the machine very easily breaks down, and might even blow the fuses if you really mix up the programme. Of course to push this analogy to its logical conclusion we would have to have computers feeding each other information to simulate the human situation. Only when they were synchronised would the total system run properly.

This is—although very crude—a different model from that of the old "Instinctivists" or of the "Behaviourists." To the Instinctivists, behaviour resulted simply from the manifestation of innate tendencies which in interaction produced such things as "territorialism" or "maternal behaviour" or "acquisitiveness" and the like. To the Behaviourists, the infant was (as we have seen), a *tabula rasa* and behaviour ultimately was the result of learning *via* "conditioning."[6] Culturalists in anthropology and the social sciences share the *tabula rasa* view and see all behaviour above the primitive-drive level as a result of the learning of a particular culture. My view sees the human organism as "wired" in a certain way so that it can process information about certain things like language and rules about sex, and not other things, and that it can only process this information at certain times and in certain ways. This wiring is geared to the life cycle so that at any one moment in a population of *Homo sapiens* there will be individuals with a certain "store" of behaviour at one stage of the cycle giving out information to others at another stage, the latter being wired to treat the information in a certain way. As an outcome of the interaction of these individuals at various stages, certain "typical" relationships will emerge.

THIS MAY SEEM either tortuous or obvious, but I can assure you it *is* a different way of viewing human behaviour and social structure than the orthodox one, which informs not only anthropology but our whole secular social ideology. This says: When in trouble, change the programme because we can write any programme we want to. What we should say is: When in trouble, find out what is in the wiring, because only then will we know what programmes we can safely write.

The culturalists only acknowledge a very general "capacity for culture"—if they acknowledge anything at all about the general characteristics of the species. To them, all culture is pure human invention, and is passed on from generation to generation by symbolic learning. Logically, it follows that if ever this store of culture should be lost, it is improbable that it would be invented again in the same forms. Thus something as specific as totemism and exogamy—that old anthropological chestnut—has to be seen in this view as a pure intellectual invention, and it would be unlikely that it would be invented again. I don't think so. I think my tribe with no experience of any other human culture and no knowledge of "totemism" and "exogamy" would produce both very quickly, and what is more these phenomena would be immediately recognisable and analysable by anthropologists.

In fact those anthropologists like Tylor who argued for the "psychic unity of mankind" were acknowledging a similar position. They argued that such customs had not been invented in one area and diffused throughout the world, but were stock responses of the human psyche to external pressures. They were somehow reflections of "Human Nature"—a phrase that we have been discouraged from using. The argument for psychic unity also had to face the "Constants can't explain Variables" charge, but we have dealt with that one already. The psychic unity argument, however, was never pushed as far as I am pushing it. The universal psyche for these anthropologists had no specific "content"—it was a capacity to do human things, but most of its proponents would have maintained it was a general learning capacity and that culture was invented. As I have said, at one level this is true—at the level of specific content—but we must not be dazzled by this into ignoring those basic processes and forms that crop up with regular monotony.[7]

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[5] This is in fact more like the modern theory of instinct, but to go into the ramifications of this would take us far afield.

[6] Psycho-analysis leans to the instinctivist end but is a special case in some ways.

[7] Here we must not slip into the error of thinking that *universal processes* necessarily produce *uniform results*. Far from it. This is not true even in the plant kingdom and is even less true in the animal.

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Biology or Culture?

I CAN NOW RETURN to the problem of the route by which I reached this conclusion. The question that had been plaguing me was really "How do we know what's in the wiring and how did it get there?" For we can only find out really what it is all about if we know how it was constructed, to what end it was produced. It is no good trying to use an analog computer as if it were a digital computer since they were designed for different uses. The answer to this should have been obvious, and soon became so: what is in the wiring of the human animal got there by the same route as it got into any other animal, by mutation and natural selection. These "great constructors," as Konrad Lorenz calls them, had produced remarkable end-products in the social behaviour of all kinds of animals, reptiles, birds, fishes and insects. And it is here that the message of Lorenz and his associates becomes important: behaviour evolves just as structure evolves and the evolution of the two is ultimately linked.

We are back to Darwin's principle from which this article started and from which anthropology so disastrously departed at the turn of the century. What the behavioural zoologists (in Europe usually known as "ethologists") showed us, was that units of behaviour evolved on the same principle as units of anatomy and physiology; that a head movement that was part of a bird's innate repertoire of actions had an adaptive significance as great as the evolution of the wing itself. The head movement may be precisely the thing that inhibits the attack of another bird, for example, and over the millennia has become "fixed" as a signal recognised by the species as an inhibitor. Even if one does not accept that humans have "instincts" of this kind (I think they have a few but not many) the point that one should look at behaviour as the end-product of evolution, and analyse it in terms of the selection pressures that produced it, is well taken. If we have this marvellous flexibility in our learning patterns then this is a feature of the biology of our species and we should ask *why* we have this flexibility. What selection pressures operated to bring about this particular biological feature? Our enormous dependence on culture as a mode of adaptation itself stands in need of explanation, for this too is a species-specific characteristic, and it gets us into trouble as much as it raises us to glory. It is a two-edged weapon in the fight for survival, and the simple brutes with their instinctive head-wagging may well live to have the last laugh.

But the brutes, it transpired, were not so simple. When one looked at our cousins, the other primates, the complexity of their social behaviour was amazing. One thing the ethologists taught us to do was to compare the behaviour of closely related species in order to get at the "proto-behaviour" of the group of animals concerned. The continuing flow of excellent material on non-human primates in the wild showed us how many and subtle were the resemblances between ourselves and our simian relatives. Wider afield, the growing science of animal behaviour showed that many mammals, and vertebrates generally, had social systems which duplicated features of our own society, and in which similar processes occurred, and even similar social pathologies. Lorenz showed how aggression was the basis of social bonding; Wynne-Edwards postulated that the "conventionalised competition" which controlled aggression was itself rooted in the control of numbers; Chance demonstrated that among primates the elementary social bond was that between males rather than that between males and females, and so on.[8] The politics of macaque monkeys suggested that Aristotle was right: in so far as he was a primate, Man was by nature a political animal. (It is significant how often, when this is quoted, the clause *by nature* is omitted.) Ants can have societies, but ants cannot have politics. Politics only occurs when members can change places in a hierarchy as a result of competition. So man is more than social, he is political; and he is political because he is that kind of primate—terrestrial and gregarious.

THE UPSHOT OF THIS is that it became more and more obvious that we had a considerable animal heritage and hence a great store of comparative data to draw on in making generalisations about our own species. And it forces upon us this observation: if we find our own species displaying certain patterns of social behaviour that duplicate those of other similar species—depending on the level of similarity of course—then we will often need to say little more about these patterns other than that they are what we would expect from say, a terrestrial primate, a land-dwelling mammal, a gregarious vertebrate, or whatever. Of course, some aspects of these patterns and a great deal of their content will be unique, but this is only to say that they will be species-specific. Every species is unique since it is the end-product of a particular path of

[8] Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*; Methuen (1966). V. C. Wynne-Edwards, *Animal Dispersion in Relation to Social Behaviour*; Oliver and Boyd (1962). M. R. A. Chance, "The Nature and Special Features of the Instinctive Social Bond of Primates." In *Social Life of Early Man*, S. L. Washburn, ed., Methuen (1962).

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evolution. The real question is the nature of the uniqueness—which is where we started. And we cannot answer it until we know what we have *in common with* all other species, and with some other species, and with only closely related species.

Thus the argument that we differ from all other species as a result of the triumph of Culture over Biology I find false, because culture is an aspect of our biological difference from other species. It is the name for a kind of behaviour found in our species which ultimately depends on an organ, the brain, in which we happen to have specialised. Differences between ourselves and other primates, for example, do not stem from the fact that we have in some way *overcome* our primate natures, but stem from the fact that we are a different kind of primate with a different kind of nature. At the level of forms and processes we behave culturally because it is in our nature to behave culturally, because mutation and natural selection have produced this animal which *has* to behave culturally, has to invent rules, make myths, speak languages and form men's clubs, in the same way as the hamadryas baboon has to form harems, adopt infants, and bite its wives on the neck.

BUT WHY CULTURE? Why didn't our simian ancestors content themselves with a much less flexible, and perhaps at the time less vulnerable, way of coping with nature's exigencies? This is where another strand of evidence comes in—the material on human evolution. In Darwin's day this was practically non-existent and even now it is relatively meagre. But we now can trace with some confidence the general picture of man's evolution over at least four million years, and we have evidence that the hominid line may well go back over thirty million.

This is not the place for an exposition of what we have come to know, and all I can do is to point out some of the implications of our new knowledge. It will be recalled that Sir Arthur Keith set the limit of brain size below which was mere animal at 750 *c.c.s.* The modern human brain averages about 1,400 *c.c.s.*, roughly twice that of Keith's minimum. The brain of the chimpanzee is roughly 400 *c.c.s.*, that of the gorilla 500 *c.c.s.* Modern discoveries have shown that hominids have existed for at least two million years and probably longer, and that at that early date in their evolution they were indulging in activities that imply the existence of cultural traditions even if of a rudimentary form. The most striking evidence of this is the existence of tool-making industries first in bone and horn and then in stone (wood does not survive but was undoubtedly used) in small-brained hominids in east and south Africa. Two million years ago, our ancestors with brain sizes ranging from 435 *c.c.s.* to 680 *c.c.s.*—only a little better, you see, than the gorilla—were doing very human things, cultural things, before having reached the Cerebral Rubicon. They were hunting, building shelters, making tools, treating skins, living in base camps and possibly many other things (speaking languages perhaps?) that we cannot know directly, while their morphology was still predominantly ape-like and their brains in some cases smaller than the apes. What was not ape-like about them was their dentition and their bipedal stance. In these features they were well launched on the road to humanity since both reflect the adaptation to a hunting way of life which differentiates these animals from their primate cousins.

PLEASE NOTE that I say these "animals"—I might just have easily have said these "men." And this is, perhaps, the moral of the story. What the record of evolution shows is no sharp break between Man and Animal that can be pinpointed at a certain brain size or anything else. What it shows is a very gradual transition in which changes in locomotion led the way and in which the brain was something of a sluggard. The pelvis of the *Australopithecinae*—those man-apes of south and east Africa—is strikingly human and totally unlike anything in an ape, because these were bipedal creatures; but the brain was, if anything, smaller than that of a gorilla—an animal not particularly noted for its cultural achievements.

The moral goes deeper. Once launched on the way to humanity through bipedalism, hunting, and the use of tools, our ancestors became more dependent on their brains than their predecessors had been. If they were going to survive largely by skill and cunning and rapid adaptation to the changing circumstances of the Pleistocene epoch, then a premium was put on the capacity for cultural behaviour about which we have been speaking. Man took "the cultural way" before he was clearly distinguishable from the animals, and in consequence found himself stuck with this mode of adaptation. It turned out to be very successful, although for a while it must have been touch-and-go. But because he became dependent on culture, then mutation and natural selection operated to improve on the organ most necessary to cultural behaviour, namely the brain and in particular the neo-cortex with its important functions of association and control. Those animals that were best able to be cultural were

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favoured in the struggle for existence. Man's anatomy, physiology and behaviour are, therefore, in large part the *result* of culture. His large and efficient brain is a *consequence* of culture as much as its *cause*. He does not have a culture because he has a large brain—he has a large brain because several million years ago his little-brained ancestors tried the cultural way to survival. Of course, the correct way to view this is as a "feed-back" process. As cultural pressures grew so did selection pressures for better brains, and as better brains emerged culture could take new leaps forward thus in turn exerting more pressures, and so on.

Again, this is an over-simplified account, and the actual picture of the evolution of the brain is much more complex. But in essential outline it is true, and for our immediate purposes enough to make the point that our uniqueness is a biological uniqueness and that culture does not in some mysterious sense represent a break with biology. Our present biological make-up is a consequence among other things of cultural selection pressures. We are, therefore, biologically constituted to produce culture, not simply because by some accident we got a brain that could do cultural things, but because the cultural things themselves propelled us into getting a larger brain. We are not simply the *producers of* institutions like the family, science, language, religion, warfare, kinship systems, exogamy, etc.; we are the *product of* them. Hence it is scarcely surprising that we continually reproduce that which produced us. We were selected to do precisely this, and in the absence of tuition our mythical tribe would do it all over again in the same way. It is not only the *capacity* for culture, then, that lies in the brain: it is the *forms* of culture, the universal grammar of language and behaviour.

Uniqueness & Commonality

THIS, THEN, IS HOW it all got into the wiring of the human computer. Once we know these facts about human evolution there is no great mystery in principle about the production of culture by human beings and the relative uniformity of its processes. There are many mysteries of fact which will never be solved since we can only infer the behaviour of fossil man and never observe it. But in principle, once we accept that culture is the major selection pressure operating on the evolution of human form and behaviour, and that it has produced an animal wired for the processing of various cultural programmes, then the problem of the "uniqueness of man" becomes a problem on the same level as the problem of the uniqueness of any other animal species.

Putting together the insights of the ethologists and the students of human evolution then, we can scan the behaviour of related species for aspects of behaviour that are common to all primates, and beyond that we can look to mammals and vertebrates for clues. For in the process of evolution we did not cease to be primates or mammals. In fact, as Weston La Barre[9] has said, part of our success lies in exaggerating certain mammalian tendencies rather than in losing them (length of suckling, for example). A good deal of our behaviour, and in particular our social arrangements, can be seen as variations on common primate and gregarious-mammalian themes. Certain "unique" aspects—such as the use of true language—can then be investigated for what they are, biological specialisations produced by the unique evolutionary history of the species.

This perspective enables us to look at human society and behaviour comparatively without any necessity to propound theories of the total and essential difference between ourselves and other animals. It puts the obvious uniqueness into perspective, and does not allow us to lose sight of our commonality with the animal kingdom. We are "the Cultural Animal" all right, but both terms should be given equal weight, and one does not contradict the other. For the last time then, let me say that culture does not represent a triumph over nature, for such a thing is impossible. It represents an end-product of a natural process. It is both the producer and the product of our human nature, and in behaving culturally we are behaving naturally.

TO BURY THIS ISSUE once and for all, at least to my own satisfaction, let me add a word about the nature of culture as opposed to the nature of instinct. It is often said that man has "lost" all his instincts. This is a shade extreme. If I may paraphrase Oscar Wilde, to lose some of one's instincts is unfortunate, to lose all of them smacks of carelessness. No species could afford to be that careless. But it is true that in terms of innate mechanisms which produce items of behaviour complete at their first performance and relatively unmodifiable by experience, man has very few. Instead, it is often claimed, he has intelligence, foresight, wisdom and the like, and the enormous capacity to learn. Now in ditching instinct and opting for intelligence man took something of a risk, since in-

[9] Weston La Barre, *The Human Animal*; University of Chicago Press (1955).

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stinct does provide a surety of response that has been evolved from trial and error over millions of years. Ant societies are much better organised and more efficient than any human societies and are driven wholly on instinctive mechanisms. But again instinct has its costs. It is too rigid. Changed circumstances cannot be met by a rapid adjustment in behaviour, and insects and animals heavily dependent on instinct have to wait for processes of genetic change to effect changes in the instincts themselves before they can adjust. The higher we go up the phyletic scale the less true this is of course, and with man least true of all. Thus there is a cost-benefit analysis involved in the shedding of innate instincts in favour of more complex modes of behaving.

The crux of the matter is this: even if a species sheds its dependence on instincts, it still has to get done the same things that instincts were designed to do. To put it into our earlier language, culture has to do the same job that instinct had been doing. This is another paradox, I suppose, but an intriguing one. Because to get culture to do the same jobs as instinct had been doing, one had to make cultural behaviour in many ways like instinctive behaviour. It had to be "unconscious" so that it did not require thought for its operation; it had to be "automatic" so that certain stimuli would automatically produce it; it had to be common to all members of the population.

If we look at our cultural behaviour, how much of it is in fact "intelligent" and conscious, and how much at that unthinking automatic response level? The answer is, of course, that the vast majority of our behaviour is the latter, absorbed during our socialisation and built into our patterns of habitual thought, belief and response. Habit indeed is, as William James said, the great flywheel of society. Anthropologists speak of "covert" or "unconscious" culture to refer to this iceberg of assumptions, values, and habitual responses. And sitting over them all of course is the great evolutionary invention of conscience, or super-ego, or moral sense, or whatever you want to call it. The sense of guilt, of having broken the taboos, the rules, the laws of the tribe, keeps most of us in line most of the time. Conscience is an empty canister that culture fills, but once filled it becomes a dynamic controller of behaviour. Most of our behaviour, however, never even rises to the point where conscience and the sense of guilt need to step in. We do what we do from habit, even down to tiny little details of gestures and twitches of the facial muscles. Most of this we never think about, but we rapidly recognise when other people are not doing it (and often lock them up in asylums as lunatics). Think only of the example of the man walking down the road in the rain without a raincoat, smiling, shoulders back, head facing the sky. Clearly a madman. He should be hunched and hurrying and looking miserable, with his jacket collar up at least. . . .

The genius of nature here stands revealed and the paradox is resolved. Of course most of our learned cultural behaviour in fact operates almost exactly like instinct. And, as we have seen, this has to be the case. The customs and usages of the tribe, although not instinctive themselves, had to do the same jobs as instincts and hence had to be built into the automatic habit patterns of the tribal members, with guilt as a safeguard. (This was not foolproof, but neither is instinct itself.) So the same effect is achieved, and those habits which have proved useful in survival become part of the behavioural repertoire of the people. But, and here is the element of genius, these habits can be changed within a generation. One does not have to wait for the long process of natural selection to operate before these quasi-instinctual behaviours can be modified. They can be modified very rapidly to meet changing circumstances. Thus, one has all the benefits of instinctive behaviour without its costs—over time that is. At any one time the rigidity of cultural habits will be just as invulnerable to change as any instinct—as we know to our cost—and habits are very conservative. Since most of them are passed on by means other than direct tuition, they tend to persist over generations despite changes in overt education. But they can be changed relatively rapidly compared with the time-span needed for changes in genetic material. Thus man can make rapid adjustments without anarchy (which does not mean that he always does so).

HERE AGAIN WE SEE learned, cultural behaviour as yet another kind of biological adaptation. At this level, other species too display behaviour of the same kind, and the higher in the scale they are the more dependent they become on habits transferred over the generations by learning rather than instincts transferred in the genetic code. But we must always keep in mind that this is not a sharp distinction. The code is not silent about learning and habits. If the position taken here is anywhere near correct, then instructions about habitual behaviour are as much in the code as instructions about instinctive behaviour.

Mind or Nothing

THIS MODEL OF BEHAVIOUR, then, sees the human actor as a bundle of potentialities rather than a *tabula rasa*: potentialities for

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action, for instinct, for learning, for the development of unconscious habits. These potentials or predispositions or biases are the end-product of a process of natural selection peculiar to our species. One consequence of this view is that much of the quasi-instinctive cultural behaviour of man can be studied in much the same way and by much the same methods as ethologists study the truly instinctive behaviour of other animals. Many strands of investigation seem to be leading in this direction at the moment.

The kind of over-all investigation that emerges from this theoretical position would utilise primarily three kinds of data: data from human behaviour both contemporary and known in history; data on animal behaviour, particularly that on wild primates; data on hominid evolution with special attention to the evolution of the brain. Eventually, of course, data from genetics—molecular genetics, behaviour genetics, and population genetics—will have to be included. But this is perhaps jumping ahead too far. At the moment the best we can say is that we should be prepared to use genetic data when we become sophisticated enough to incorporate it.

I began with the theme of human uniqueness, and should end with the point that our uniqueness has to be interpreted in the same way as the uniqueness of any other species. We have to ask "how come?", or how did culture get into the wiring? How did the great constructors operate to produce this feature which, like everything else about us, is not anti-nature, or super-organic, or extra-biological, or any of the other demagogic fantasy-states that science and religion imagine for us. Darwin did not banish mind from the universe as Samuel Butler feared: he gave us a basis for explaining how mind got into the universe in the first place. And it got there as did every other natural and biological feature: by natural selection. The tool-making animal needed mind to survive; that is, he needed language and culture and the reorganisation of experience that goes with these. And having got the rudiments and become dependent on them there was no turning back. There was no retreat to the perilous certainty of instinct. It was mind or nothing. It was classification and verbalisation, rules and laws, mnemonics and knowledge, ritual and art, that piled up their pressures on the precarious species, demanding better and better brains to cope with this new organ—culture—now essential to survival. Two related processes, thought and self-control, evolved hand in hand. Their end-product is the cultural animal, which speaks and rules itself because that is the kind of animal it is; because speaking and self-discipline have made it what it is; because it is what it produces and was produced by what it is.

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To an Emergent Politician

One can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, you
Inform us. Which is realistic. Which is even true.

But how many eggs have been broken? And why the haste?
Who is eating the omelette? And how does it taste?

And why do you seem to relish the breaking of eggs more
Than the cooking? The ones lying smashed on the floor—

What are they doing there? May we ask how it happens
You are the only cock left in a huddle of drab hens?

But that's the beauty of imported proverbs for a gent
In your position: the way they choke domestic argument.

D. J. Enright

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Column

DONS DELIGHT to bark and bite but until recently when universities, alas, became hot news, their snarls were usually confined to the privacy of senior common rooms or the obscurity of learned journals. Today they have a wider audience for their malice, and what goes on in college meetings or university councils is as much a matter for the gossip columnist as any debutantes' cocktail party. Thousands take pleasure in Mercurius Oxoniensis' news-letters in *The Spectator*, and there is hardly a detail of university life at Warwick which is not known to the public.

Plants that flourish in shy seclusion sometimes wilt when exposed to harsher airs, and academic controversy when conducted *coram publico* does not always bring credit to its participants. The recent debate, for instance, in the columns of the *Times Literary Supplement* must have struck many of its readers as, at best, slightly mystifying and at worst extremely bad-tempered.

For, after all, the protagonists are two very distinguished academic figures. Dr. Leavis has probably exercised a greater influence on the teaching of English in this country than anyone else of his generation and in his thousands of devoted and admiring pupils his influence still lives on. Lord Annan, once the Grand Young Man of Cambridge, has been Provost of King's and is now the head of one of this country's greatest academic institutions, University College, London. These two eminent and angry men have been denouncing each other with a vindictiveness which testifies to their continued vitality, if not to their self-control. Their teeth leave marks which are plain to everyone; their barking, on the other hand, has a tendency to dissipate itself into a confusion of sounds which makes it exceedingly difficult for anyone to understand precisely what they are barking about.

One reason for this, perhaps, is that since Newman hardly anything has inspired quite so much bad prose as the subject of university education. There seems to be something about it which drives its exponents into realms of abstraction, platitude, and well-meaning but windy rhetoric which otherwise they would never dream of entering. The prose in which the Committee of Vice-Chancellors pronounces its *ex cathedra* judgments on higher education should be exhibited in public places as an example of how not to write English. This is no accident, because the committee represents a kind of lowest common denominator of academic opinion at a time of unexampled confusion of mind about what universities are meant to be or what purposes they are meant to serve.

IT IS STRIKING EVIDENCE of the virulence of this linguistic disease that it seems to have infected even Lord Annan and Dr. Leavis. For on other subjects Lord Annan can be an admirable writer, while Dr. Leavis has been responsible for some of the finest literary criticism of our time; when it comes to universities, however, their literary gifts seem to desert them altogether. Lord Annan, for instance, as if angrily aware that he has not made the grounds of his disagreement with Dr. Leavis quite clear, at one moment produces like a trump card the statement that the essential and exclusive virtue of the university is *the cultivation of the intellect*. Now no doubt there is a sense, though not a very helpful one, in which this statement may be true. On the other hand, so far as I understand Lord Annan or Dr. Leavis at all, I can see no reason whatever why Dr. Leavis should disagree with it nor why it should leave the slightest dent in his argument. Yet at the same time, as a description of how the universities actually function at the present time, Lord Annan's proposition in no way fits the facts. In what way, for instance, is the teaching of engineering, or agriculture, or medicine predominantly devoted to the cultivation of the intellect? I do not ask this with any wish to disparage any of these admirable and useful sciences, but merely to suggest that it is quite possible to study them at the university with hardly more cultivation of the intellect than is required to master the twelve times table. And would Lord Annan seriously affirm that all, or even most, of the young men and women who at present attend our universities are primarily engaged in the arduous task of cultivating their intellects? If so, he would exhibit a lack of understanding of his own students which I am sure he is not capable of. Lord Annan, I suppose, might reply that he is talking not of the actual but the ideal; but in that case he is simply introducing that confusion between what is and what ought to be which continually bedevils all discussion of university education. The truth is, of course, that many people attend universities for quite different reasons than Lord Annan suggests, and that universities also have quite other and humbler functions than the exalted one which he ascribes to them.

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THE TROUBLE IS, I think, that in this particular discussion Lord Annan finds himself in an uncongenial role. He is by nature a progressive and an ameliorationist, with a critical eye for the weaknesses of our society and, as a humane and compassionate man, a disposition to amend them. But in this case, as against Dr. Leavis, he finds himself in the position of defending the *status quo*, and indeed it is almost essential that he should do so because he passionately desires that there should be more of it. Indeed, one of his charges against Dr. Leavis is that he is opposed to that extension of higher education which he himself so ardently desires.

Not at all, replies the Doctor. He is, it appears, as ardent as Lord Annan in the wish to expand the provision of higher education; but since, in his view, the universities are already failing to fulfil the very exalted function which he, like Lord Annan, assigns to them, how will it help them to perform it any better simply by making them larger? Will they not, rather, perform even worse?

In this respect, at least, I think Dr. Leavis has rather the better of the argument. He has, as opposed to Lord Annan, a very precise view of what the purpose of a university should be. It is to apply an essential critical vision to our society and our culture and to discover, both by teaching and by research, the means by which this critical vision can be continuously enriched and refined. The university should be a school of studies for those who devote their minds to subjecting the values of our society to informed scrutiny and examination and, by doing so, help the rest of us both to understand what they are and in what respects they deserve our acceptance or rejection. In Dr. Leavis' view, the universities should be the salt of our society; his complaint is that the salt has lost, or is losing, its savour.

IT IS ONE OF THE MYSTERIES of the debate between Lord Annan and Dr. Leavis that Lord Annan would not, I feel sure, fundamentally disagree with this view of the university. Indeed, does it not enlarge and give precision to his own view that the university's function is the cultivation of the intellect? He might more easily, I think, quarrel with Dr. Leavis' additional, but quite separate view, that the only way in which the university can be enabled to carry out its critical function is by making the study of English the centre of all its activities; in Dr. Leavis' university, English would occupy theology's empty throne as Queen of the Sciences. But there is no reason why one should not accept the first view while rejecting the second; though I am afraid that, things being as they are and Dr. Leavis being what he is, this would probably lay oneself open to the same charges of treachery, philistinism, and incomprehension which Dr. Leavis flings so freely at Lord Annan and the gaggle of academic peers who play the part of bogeymen in his vision of university life, which at times rather resembles Dante's Inferno with Lord Annan, Lord Robbins, and Lord Snow in its nethermost circle.

This is a risk anyone must take who dares to agree with Dr. Leavis in spite of himself, but one would after all willingly accept it if only one could advance the argument a little further and rescue it from the slightly miasmic atmosphere in which he and Lord Annan conduct their no-holds-barred academic infighting. For university education has by now become a matter which concerns everybody, and the university has come to occupy a position at once so crucial and so vulnerable that it requires the greatest possible measure of goodwill from all interested parties if it is to discharge the enormously heavy burdens which are at present being laid upon it. Not least among those whose goodwill is somewhat too easily taken for granted is the ordinary taxpayer. There are moments when one cannot help feeling that if a working man, who every week contributes out of his pay packet a large contribution to the high and increasing costs of a university system from which he will never directly benefit, were, in search of a little sweetness and light, to read Lord Annan's and Dr. Leavis' exchange of insults, he might well feel inclined to throw up his hands in despair; not only because of the difficulty of making head or tail of it, but because of the sheer intellectual bad manners displayed in their exhibition bout.

IT IS ONE OF THE FAULTS of the academic mind that it is prone, in the interest of higher things, to ignore the facts of what are sometimes rather ugly situations. So far as the universities are concerned, one of those facts today is that there is now no alternative to a very large expansion during the coming decade; for better or worse, the decision would appear to have already been taken by those who have the power to enforce it. A necessary corollary to this is that there will be an increasing degree of public supervision of the uses which the universities make of the increasingly large revenues entrusted to them by the taxpayer. It would appear to follow that, if the universities are to defend their freedom effectively, they will have to take greater trouble to explain their policies and their purposes to the public in language which it can understand. He who pays the piper calls the tune, and it is necessary that the public should be offered the right tunes. They are not likely to do so from the scrannel piping of the Annan-Leavis

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exchanges and unless they are given some rather more attractive music, there is a danger that they will be tempted to think that university education is far too serious a matter to be left to dons. It is of course a danger that should be resisted; but sometimes dons do not make it very easy to do so.

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SURELY Lenin was one of the most detestable of the ideologues who from time to time have been in a position to impose their will on the human race, and not all the efforts of Soviet and many other historians and biographers have been able to conceal what a very disagreeable character he was. But because he was a great man, we still endeavour to attribute to him qualities he never possessed: imagination, compassion, artistic taste, profound sympathy with and understanding of the sufferings of his fellow human beings. We like to join the bandwagon of history and hate to think that great events can be the work of evil men.

In a sense, this is to do an injustice to Lenin, while at the same time deceiving ourselves about him; he is interesting enough as he really was without our trying to improve on him. In the many eulogies, appraisals, assessments, which have appeared during this year's centenary of his birth, I have not yet come across any reference to what may have been one of his most remarkable achievements. For it seems reasonable to believe that, among the many other things he did to set his stamp upon this century, there was one for which he is not normally given the credit; that is to say, the re-introduction of torture into Europe as an instrument of state policy.

The concept of terror, of course, was familiar to Marxist thought and was sanctified by revolutionary tradition; Marx and Engels were for it, but Lenin curiously enough was not. But terror, theoretically at least, is something different from torture; it includes the physical liquidation of one's political opponents but not necessarily their ill-treatment. Equally, police brutality has been, and remains, a feature of most bourgeois régimes; it is one of the remnants of barbarism that civilisation has never been able to eradicate. But again, police brutality is something different from torture as a deliberate instrument of policy.

Indeed, since the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, torture had been universally discredited in Europe as a method either of investigation or of punishment, and was regarded as incompatible with the pretensions of any state which claimed to be civilised. In this respect, the nineteenth and the twentieth century up to the First World War registered an almost unbroken progress towards more humane methods of investigation and punishment, even though police procedures might still be disfigured by sadism and brutality.

In its initial stages, the Russian Revolution followed the same code, as the Tzarist régime had before it. Though the Tzarist secret police, the Third Section instituted by Nicholas I, was guilty of every kind of irregular procedure, combined with an abysmal stupidity, there is no evidence, as far as I know, of its use of torture and this continued to be true up to the collapse of the régime.

One of Lenin's first acts was to revive the secret police, in the form of the Cheka, directed by Felix Dzerzhinsky, a Polish St. Just in whose eyes every means was justified in the service of the revolution. There is no doubt that from the earliest days of the Bolshevik régime, torture was practised by the Cheka, though never on the scale with which it was applied later by the GPU and the NKVD; and just as the Third Section reported directly to Nicholas I, so the Cheka reported directed to the Central Committee. Dzerzhinsky indeed held his authority from Lenin, who was fully aware of all his actions and must be held equally responsible for them. The pressure of events, and in particular the ferocity and savagery exhibited by both sides in the Civil War, increased the brutality of the methods employed by the Cheka, and it is significant that Stalin, as General Secretary, enjoyed the closest and most confidential relations with them.

Nothing succeeded like excess. Dzerzhinsky's efficiency, his ice-cold devotion to duty, established the secret police as one of the essential pillars of the Soviet state, and the methods which he initiated became a part of its normal procedures, though it was not until under Stalin that they were given official recognition.

It is impossible to overestimate the change in the consciousness of Europeans implied by such a development. It is ironical that the state which claimed to be leading mankind to a new and higher level of civilisation should be responsible for this regression to the perverted forms which civilisation had taken in the past and that Lenin, so often represented as the kindly father of his people, should have approved the torture of his children. It is said that he watched the growing power of the Cheka with regret; I have never seen anything in his character or in his form of revolutionary morality which would justify one in thinking he felt the slightest twinge of remorse. Credit should be given where credit is due.

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G. A. Henty & the Vision of Empire

By Robert A. Huttenback

ON 24 JUNE 1872, Disraeli rose to his feet in London's great Crystal Palace and attacked the anti-imperial bias of the Liberal Party. He summoned his listeners to reject the Liberal philosophy and to take pride in an empire "which may become the source of incalculable strength to this land." In his speech Disraeli associated the Conservatives with the advocacy of empire, and ushered in the period of "prestige imperialism" during which the empire became to many Englishmen the symbol of British strength and moral rectitude.

> The issue is not a mean one. It is whether you will be content to be a comfortable England, modelled and moulded upon Continental principles and meeting in due course an inevitable fate, or whether you will be a great country, an Imperial country, a country where your sons, when they rise, rise to paramount positions, and obtain not merely the esteem of their countrymen, but command the respect of the world.[1]

Late Victorian England was not deaf to Disraeli's plea. To the worker in the dreary "black lands" of the industrial midlands, the vision of the British flag flying over so many parts of the world gave vicarious pride and pleasure. The stirrings of public awareness of empire made the imperial proconsul an increasingly popular figure in the children's literature of the day, and no author of books for the young was read with greater avidity than George Alfred Henty.

Henty was born in Trumpington, just outside Cambridge. His family, although not rich, was sufficiently affluent to send him first to Westminster School and then to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. Henty was not, however, by temperament a scholar, and in the early months of the Crimean War he accepted a commission in the army's hospital commissariat and forsook the tranquil backs never to return. Henty served in the dank charnel houses of the Crimea as a hospital supply officer and saw active duty outside Sebastopol, but he was invalided home and was subsequently ordered to Italy.

To Henty, the prospects of life as an administrative officer seemed bleak and devoid of the excitement he so avidly sought. He consequently resigned his commission, and after a brief excursion into the Welsh mines, found himself at a loose end in London. Recalling that the *Morning Advertiser* had printed some short pieces he had sent home from the Crimea, Henty determined to become a journalist, and as a correspondent for the *Standard* he soon led the adventurous life to which he had so long aspired. He met Garibaldi and reported on the Abyssinian campaign of 1867–68, the opening of the Suez Canal, the Franco-Prussian War and Paris Commune of 1870–71, the Ashanti campaign of 1873 and the Russian conquest of Khiva in that same year, the Carlist War in Spain, the Prince of Wales' tour of India in 1875, and the Serbo-Turkish War of the following year.

When Henty started writing his adventure stories in 1868, he based them either on his own personal experiences or on the events of recorded history. But he often borrowed from the historians of his day with an abandon verging on outright plagiarism. Francis Parkman, in his *Montcalm and Wolfe*, described the British hero's death in the following terms:

> ... Wolfe himself led the charge, at the head of the Louisbourg grenadiers. A shot shattered his wrist. He wrapped a handkerchief about it and kept on. Another shot struck him, and he still advanced, when a third lodged in his breast. He staggered, and sat on the ground.... He begged them to lay him on the ground. They did so, and asked if he would have a surgeon. "There's

[1] Quoted in George Bennett, *The Concept of Empire* (London, 1953), pp. 258–259.

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no need," he answered, "it is all over with me. . . ."[2]

Henty, in *With Wolfe in Canada* (p. 372) wrote of the same poignant scene:

> . . . . Wolfe himself led the charge at the head of the Louisburg Grenadiers. A shot shattered his wrist. He wrapped his handkerchief around it and kept on. Another shot struck him, but the still advanced. When a third pierced his breast he staggered and sat down. Two or three officers and men carried him to the rear and then laid him down and asked if they should send for a surgeon. "There is no need," he said. "It is all over with me. . . ."

Parkman and Henty portray Montcalm's demise almost identically: "Montcalm," the historian and novelist both aver, "was borne by the tide of fugitives towards (toward) the town. As he approached (neared) the walls (gate) a shot passed through his body." Perhaps Henty thought it sufficient to refer to "the excellent work entitled 'Montcalm and Wolfe' by Mr. Francis Parkman," in his preface.

Where borrowing from Parkman at least manifested good literary and historical taste, Godfrey Davies, in his analysis of Henty's use of history,[3] concluded that Henty too often gained the inspiration for his tales from the works of a few rather indiscriminately chosen writers, whose errors and prejudices he slavishly repeated. Henty based three of his books, *The Young Buglers, Under Wellington's Command* and *With Moore at Corunna*, very largely on Sir William Napier's *History of the War in the Peninsula*. Napier was a devout Whig and a bitter critic of the Tory government in office during the Peninsula War. He admired Napoleon and detested the Spaniards. Henty, as a consequence, has the hero in *The Young Buglers* lead the French to a Spanish guerrilla stronghold; while British prisoners, in *Under Wellington's Command*, fight with the French against the Spaniards! Wellington is informed of both events and smiles in approval. Davies contends that had the two incidents actually occurred, Wellington, well aware of the great contributions of the Spanish irregulars, would promptly have sent for the provost marshal. To be charitable, one could conclude that Henty's young readers, despite inaccuracies in detail and major distortions of fact and interpretation, did gain a general sense of history.

TWENTY-FIVE OF HENTY'S BOOKS concern themselves with incidents in British imperial history, and in them he broadcasts his views on imperialism and the men who established and increased the British empire. Henty was, in attitude, a typical member of the British upper class, and was no innovator. But as he was read by virtually all boys who grew up at the turn of the century and by most in the generations that followed, his works gained a significance as social commentary that they do not merit as literature.

Henty's imperial tales were all didactic, and his purpose was very much the same as that of J. E. Welldon, the headmaster of Harrow, who in 1899 wrote:

> An English Headmaster, as he looks to the future of his pupils, will not forget that they are destined to be citizens of the greatest empire under heaven; he will teach them patriotism, not by words only but by example. . . .
>
> He will inspire them with faith in the divinely ordered mission of their country and their race; he will impress upon their young minds the convictions that the great principles upon which the happiness of England rests—the principles of truth, liberty, equality, and religion—are the principles which they must carry into the world; he will emphasise the fact, that no principles however splendid, can greatly or permanently affect mankind unless they are illustrated by bright personal examples of morality.[4]

Through the adventures of his heroes Henty was determined to "teach patriotism," 'to inspire faith in the divinely ordered mission of the country and the race," and finally to offer "bright personal examples of morality." "Character," that quality so dear to the Victorian heart, was what a boy had most need of—character and a strong body. Charlie Marryat, for example, is described as:

> slight in build, but his schoolfellows knew that Charlie Marryat's muscles were as firm and hard as those of any boy in the school. In all sports requiring activity and endurance rather than weight and strength he was always conspicuous. Not one in the school could compete with him in long-distance running, and when he was one of the hares there was but little chance for the hounds. He was a capital swimmer and one of the best boxers in the school. He had a reputation for being a leader in every mischievous prank; but he was honourable and manly, would scorn to shelter himself under the semblance of a lie, and was a prime favourite with his masters as well as his schoolfellows. (*With Clive in India*, 1887).

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[2] Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (Boston, 1922), vol. 2, p. 308.

[3] Godfrey Davies, "G. A. Henty and History," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, XVIII (1955), pp. 159–169.

[4] Rupert Wilkinson, *The Prefects* (London, 1964), pp. 101–102.

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And indeed much was expected of a boy. Percy Groves' uncle asked before sending him to India (*Through the Sikh War*, 1897): "Can you run as far and as fast as most of them? Can you take a caning without whimpering over it? Do you feel in fact, that you are able to go through fully as much as any of your companions? Are you good at planning a piece of mischief, and ready to take the lead in carrying it out?"

Percy was not found wanting; neither were Reuben Whitney, Jack Robinson, Lisle Bullen, Angus Campbell, and all the others whom Henty attached to the great men of history in such epics as *With the Allies to Pekin, The Dash for Khartoum, With Roberts to Pretoria, Through the Sikh War*, and *With Kitchener in the Soudan*. Henty cared little for intellect; "pluck" was what was needed. "Give me a lad with pluck and spirit," one character proclaims,

> and I don't care a snap of my fingers whether he can construe Euripides or solve a problem in higher mathematics. What we want for India are men who can ride and shoot, who are ready at any moment to start on a hundred mile journey on horseback, who will scale a hill fort with a handful of men or with half a dozen Sowars tackle a dacoit and his band. What do the natives care for our learning? It is pluck and fighting power that have made us their masters.... (*With Clive in India*)

G. A. Henty

Henty's central characters were nearly always poor at the outset, and often they were the sons of recently widowed mothers. But Henty rarely held a boy's poverty against him. "I do not believe," he wrote in *By Sheer Pluck*, "that a boy is one whit less liked, or is ever taunted with his poverty, provided he is a good fellow." But most of Henty's "good fellows" were either the lost and unsuspecting sons of noblemen or were of an aristocratic but recently impoverished line. At any rate, superior breeding almost always manifested itself in the long run. Yorke Haberton, for example, was "a good specimen of the class by which Britain has been built up, her colonies formed, and her battlefields won—a class in point of energy, fearlessness, the spirit of adventure, and a readiness to overcome all difficulties, unmatched in the world."[5]

Sometimes Henty indulged in what can at best be called literary licence to preserve his stereotype. Yorke encounters Cecil Rhodes during the course of his adventures. The great man, of course, engages him in conversation. "So you were at Rugby!" Rhodes exclaims, "I am a public-school boy myself, you know, and there is always a fellow-feeling among public-school boys, even if they were not at the same school." In actual fact, the closest Rhodes ever got to a public school was the local grammar school, which he left at the age of sixteen. Since Rhodes represented the kind of success Henty admired, it became necessary to alter the fabric of history so that the proper moral lesson could more easily be taught; for Rhodes certainly *should* have gone to a public school.

All Henty's heroes were gentlemen and adventurers. They were modest and brave. Rex Bateman, who was instrumental in saving the situation during the Boxer Rebellion, "if he had been in the army ... would certainly have earned a V.C. for the way in which he silenced those guns." But he shrugged off his valour casually. "I don't think ... that in an affair of this sort the risk is anything compared with that which one runs in a regular fight. These little excursions I have made have had very little risk in them—practically none" (*With the Allies to Pekin*, 1903). Henty was more interested in physical courage than moral virtue. He considered action superior to contemplation and was not concerned with scholars, businessmen, or politicians. The financial implication of imperial enterprise held no fascination for him. He could never have written *By Wealth and Stealth—the Story of the British Acquisition of the Suez Canal*.

Henty's "imperial" novels nearly all followed the same pattern. They usually opened with a letter addressed to *"My Dear Lads,"* his youthful readers, which emphasised some homely

[5] *With Roberts to Pretoria* (London, 1902), p. 16.

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truth. In one of these he exhorted his readers, "never act in haste, for repentance is sure to follow. In this case, great anxiety and unhappiness were caused through a lad acting as he believed for the best, but without consulting those who had every right to a voice in the matter." "Cowardice," he later averred in *The Dash for Khartoum*, "is of all vices the most contemptible," just as bravery is of virtues the most estimable.

The hero of Henty's novels is first encountered during his formative years. Some unfortunate happening—a death in the family, an unfair trial—soon sends him to seek his fortune in the colonies. The journey is no ordinary one; it is the passage outward bound, the test to which each man must submit to discover his real "self," to prove the strength of his character, and to acquire the right to return. Once on board the vessel carrying him away, the hero encounters the native servant of a fellow passenger, and during the next few weeks conscientiously busies himself with linguistic studies. He thus gains a perfect mastery of the language of northern India, Malaya, or such other exotic place as might be his destination.

Our young friend concludes his voyage at a most happy moment. Trouble is brewing on the perimeter of the empire, and those in authority immediately recognise the unique talents of the recent arrival. In disguise and accompanied by a loyal native servant, he invades the enemy's lair. Capture inevitably follows, but at least death is averted through the sacrifice of the devoted native retainer. "Half a dozen bayonets darted into the faithful old servant's body." She fell dead, "a victim of her noble fidelity" (*In Times of Peril*). In prison the English boy is characteristically not inactive. He may even convince his captors that they should pledge fealty to the British. If he succeeds in this, his erstwhile antagonists soon become convinced of the wisdom of their decision:

> Some of the young men grumble, but the old ones rejoice at the change. Formerly they had to go to the plough with their spears and swords beside them because they never knew what marauders from the hills might sweep down, besides, when there was war they might be called away for weeks, while the crops were wasting upon the ground.... Now the Rajah has no longer to squeeze the cultivators; therefore they pay but a light rent for the lands, and the Rajah is much better off than his father was; so that on all sides there is content and prosperity... (*The Tiger of Mysore*, 1895)

> Other conquerors, many of them, India has had, but none of them have made it their first object to care for the welfare of the people at large. The Feringhees have wrung nothing from the poor to be spent in pomp and display; they permit no tyranny or ill-doing; under them the poorest peasant tills his fields in peace (*Rujub the Juggler*).

If the hero cannot induce the misguided natives to submit, he must at least save his own people. He escapes through a most ingenious stratagem and pluckily returns to the British lines with vital information. For his notable achievement the hero is commissioned the youngest lieutenant in the British army and is attached to whatever great man happens to be about—Clive or Wolfe or Kitchener. A series of hazardous campaigns follows, during the course of which our hero wins the V.C. and rescues the daughter of the commanding general from the clutches of the natives who have captured her. No wonder Henty was so widely read. Either consciously or unconsciously he satisfied his audience's psychological needs through such devices as the rescue, which catered to the "saving fantasy"—the stuff of so many youthful daydreams.

The war is finally won, and the maharajah sees the error of his ways and the futility of all attempts to resist the power of the British *Raj*. One of his soldiers shakes his head in disbelief:

> The Sikhs are no cowards, and yet though they must have been two to one, and had strong intrenchments behind which their guns were sheltered, they could not withstand them [the British].... The Sikhs have found their masters, and after all their boasting have been defeated on their own ground, and with numbers, position, and everything in their favour. (*Through the Sikh War*)

Later a Kashmiri officer of the defeated maharajah, as he comes to realise the beneficence of British rule, wishes for British control of his own home:

> What a blessing it would be to the country! In the first place, there would be neither over-taxation nor oppression. All would live and till their lands and work their loom, secure of enjoying their earnings in peace. Money would flow into the country, for the sahibs would come in great numbers from the plains for health and for sport, and would spend money freely, and would buy our manufactures from the weavers and silversmiths at first hand, while now they have to be sent down to the market at great expense, and in troublous times at great risk.

The empire was indeed the culmination of human existence, for it combined the moral virtues of humanitarianism, honesty, and fairness with the practical appeal of material progress.

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MEANWHILE, THE HERO is made a captain and adds a Distinguished Service Order to the Victoria Cross already on his chest, and he is not yet even twenty-one! With remarkable good sense he marries the general's daughter. His new father-in-law is a man of considerable means, and he settles upon the happy couple an income of three thousand pounds a year. This sum, combined with a share of the prize money realised through the sacking of several rich towns, usually enables the hero to leave the army and to buy an estate in the home counties. He now leads the life of a country squire, becomes a justice of the peace, and for many years represents his rural constituency in Parliament.

HENTY'S BOOKS rarely strayed far from this successful formula. He was really not too interested in the empire for itself, using it, rather, as a sort of Darwinian laboratory. Failures died or were disgraced, while the successful hero never stayed in the colonies, but, having proved himself, returned to the higher existence in Britain. Henty's biographer, G. Manville Fenn, a contemporary who himself wrote successful boys' books, attributed Henty's popularity to the desire of a boy "to become a man and read what men do and have done."[6] "Henty," Fenn continued, "wanted his boys to be bold, straightforward, and ready to play a young man's part, not to be milksops. He had a horror of a lad who displayed any weak emotion and shrank from shedding blood, or winced at any encounter." What of the weakest emotion of all? It rarely entered the pages of a Henty novel. His heroes might marry, but this union was more a submission to a respected institution than a triumph of powerful emotion. For as Fenn was at pains to point out, "There was nothing namby-pamby in Henty's writings... and [he] never made his works sickly by the introduction of what an effeminate writer would term the tender passion." Everything had to be quite manly and above reproach. "No," Henty told a questioner, "I never touch on love interest. Once I ventured to make a boy of twelve kiss a little girl of eleven, and I received a very indignant letter from a dissenting minister." When Dick Holland proposes to Annie in *The Tiger of Mysore*, it is because he remembers her "not like this, you know, but as the dear plucky little girl of the old days." The best thing that could be said about a girl was that she had all the virtues of a boy.

[6] G. Manville Fenn, *George Alfred Henty* (London, 1907), p. 333.

[7] Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (London, 1959), pp. 235–6.

The qualities Henty propagated as necessary for successful imperial service were much the same as those considered desirable by the men in the field themselves. Sir Harry Johnston, the "Prancing Proconsul" of Central Africa, once wrote to Cecil Rhodes in the following terms:

> I have done yeoman service for the British South Africa Company. As far as it was honest to go I have gone in helping to substantiate their claims, and in the advancement of their interests. I have spared neither the risk of my own life, the abandonment of all ideas of comfort, nor the right to rest at times like other people. I do not recollect having spent one single day as a holiday during the two years and a half which I have worked in Central Africa. Sundays and weekdays, morning and evenings, I am to be found either slaving at my desk, or tearing about the countryside on horseback, or trudging 20 miles a day on foot, or sweltering in boats, or being horribly sea-sick on Lake Nyasa steamers. I have to carry on in my office, myself, a most onerous correspondence in Swahili, which I have to write in the Arabic character, in Portuguese, in French, and in English. I have had to acquire a certain mastery of Hindustani to deal with the Indian troops. I have learnt three native languages besides Swahili in order to talk straight to the people. I have undertaken grave responsibilities, and I have devoted myself to the most wearisome and niggling of tasks. One day I am working out a survey which has to be of scrupulous accuracy, and another day I am doing what a few years ago I never thought I should be called upon to do—undertaking the whole responsibility of directing military operations. I have even had myself taught to fire Maxim guns and seven pounder cannon, I, who detest loud noises and have a horror of explosives...[7]

Henty's fictional heroes held in common with Johnston and the other proconsuls a dedication to duty. "Carrying-on" was their watchword. The difference between the real and the make-believe lay in the fact that Henty's characters rarely identified themselves with the areas in which they served, whereas men such as Johnston and Rhodes became deeply committed to the various parts of the imperial domain.

HENTY'S FEELINGS TOWARD the indigenous peoples of Britain's overseas possessions were also characteristic of his times. Although he by no means denigrated all non-white peoples. Henty was a firm believer in the uniqueness of the European and particularly of the Anglo-Saxon. Afghans, for instance, were brave and independent but unruly and ill-disciplined. And yet: "when led and organised by English officers there are no better soldiers in the world.... Guided by British advice, led by British officers, and, it may be, paid by British gold, Afghanistan

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is likely to prove an invaluable ally to us when the day comes that Russia believes herself strong enough to move forward towards the goal of her hopes and efforts for the last fifty years, the conquest of India" (*For Name and Fame*, 1885). Despite the fact that Henty usually portrayed "good natives" as heroically self-sacrificing, faithful servants or dedicated companions, they could be appreciated by Henty's characters also as worthy opponents. The rajah of Bithri (*In Times of Peril*) is treated well for having been an honourable and decent foe. Some peasants captured during the Mutiny are not put to death because they "have fought bravely for their country, and have done their duty, according to their light."

No native, however, had in full the qualities reserved, by God, solely for Englishmen. When Perry Groves (*At the Point of a Bayonet*, 1905) admits to Nana that he is really English and has only disguised himself as a Mahratta, Nana is not surprised: "There are many as tall as you, but they have not your width of shoulders and strong build. Lastly, I have wondered how a young Mahratta should be endowed with so much energy and readiness, be willing to take heavy responsibilities on his shoulders and be so full of resources." The rajah of Tripataly tells his sons (in *The Tiger of Mysore*):

> We in India have courage; but it is because our princes are brought up in indolence and luxury that the English, though but a handful in point of numbers, have become masters of such wide territories. Surajah is as brave as Dick, but he would be the first to tell you that it is to Dick that he owes it that, on their first excursion together, he escaped with his life, and that in this last adventure he attained rank and position, and has returned with these valuable gifts.

Yet the rajah has still hopes for his sons, as "Your grandmother was an Englishwoman, and I want to see that, with the white blood in your veins, you have some of the vigour and energy of Englishmen."

THE BENEFICIAL ASPECTS of imperial rule were of course emphasised by the imperial statesmen of Henty's day, and it would

A "SAVAGE" BILL OF FARE

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be a mistake to assume that many Englishmen did not genuinely feel it their duty "to carry the White Man's Burden." Imperialism was to some the state religion, and its faithful needed a moral and ethical dogma. The end of Slavery as a major issue in 1833 forced members of the next generation to find a new cause, and for many of them it became Imperialism. Sir Harry Johnston boasted that at the age of thirty-two his only religion had been the expansion of the British Empire. Sir George Goldie, the creator of a British Nigeria, later reminisced,

> All achievement begins with a dream. My dream as a young child, was to colour the map red. In 1877 I left England (largely to escape from personal entanglements) to explore the interior of Nigeria.... On the journey back I conceived the ambition of adding the region of the Niger to the British Empire.

Margery Perham describes Lord Lugard, the great British governor in both East and West Africa, as having

> the lasting habits of his Christian training. These merged with his more conscious standards which were those, he claimed, of an English Gentleman, derived immediately from his family, public school and army training, and ultimately, perhaps from the code of the medieval Christian knight. It was a double caste in that he felt himself to belong to a class within his nation and to a nation within Africa, both of which, he believed, had the code of *noblesse oblige*.[8]

The imperial public servant greatly ameliorated the conditions of everyday life in Africa and India, but he often found it difficult to maintain his own humility and to avoid slipping easily into paternalism or, worse, into the conviction of his own racial superiority. On the other hand, it is not surprising that he did. As Dr. Perham remarks: "It would have been difficult for an Englishman of the '90s, entering Africa and seeing the nakedness, ignorance, cruelty and superstitition, not to believe his race was superior and therefore justified in imposing its dominion."

It was when feelings of racial uniqueness were at their strongest that imperialism was the least attractive. Francis E. Younghusband, the leader of the British invasion of Tibet in 1904, wrote:

> No European can mix with non-Christian races without feeling his moral superiority over them. He feels, from the first contact with them, that whatever may be their relative positions from an intellectual point of view, he is stronger morally than they are. And facts show that his feeling is a true one. It is not because we are any cleverer than the natives of India, because we have more brains or bigger heads than they have, that we rule India, but because we are stronger morally than they are. Our superiority over them is not due to mere sharpness of intellect, but to that higher moral nature to which we have attained in the development of the human race.[9]

Henty reflected these same sentiments in his fiction. In his mind there appeared to be a scale of racial evolution with Europeans at the top, followed by various Oriental peoples. He might admire the intellectual and physical powers of Indians, Chinese, and Arabs; but they could not possess the basic morality and "character," "pluck," "dash," and "good-fellowship," that were so distinctly European and particularly British. Africans, according to Henty, did not have even those attributes he credited to other non-Europeans. But here again he was merely introducing into his stories the warped views and prejudices of his age. Mr. Godenough, another of his characters (*By Sheer Pluck*), described Africans as being

> just like children.... They are always laughing or quarrelling. They are good-natured and passionate, indolent, but will work hard for a time; clever up to a certain point, densely stupid beyond. The intelligence of an average negro is about equal to that of a European child of ten years old. A few, a very few, go beyond this, but these are exceptions, just as Shakespeare was an exception to the ordinary intellect of an Englishman. They are fluent talkers but their ideas are borrowed. They are absolutely without originality, absolutely without inventive power. Living among white men their imitative faculties enable them to attain a considerable amount of civilisation. Left alone to their own devices they retrograde into a state little above their native savagery.

In his heart of hearts Henty had his doubts about all non-British peoples, and his stentorian and myopic patriotism was only matched by that of British imperial officials themselves. Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the turn of the century, once told an audience:

> I believe in the British Empire and, in the second place, I believe in the British race. I believe that the British race is the greatest of governing races that the world has ever seen. I say that not merely as an empty boast, but as proved and evidenced by the success which we have had in administering the vast dominions which are connected with these small islands....

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[8] Margery Perham, *Lugard, the Years of Adventure 1858–1898* (London, 1956), pp. 197, 482–3.

[9] *The Heart of a Continent* (London, 1896), pp. 396–7.

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> The old British spirit still lives in the Englishmen of today.... I say that he is indeed a craven and poor-spirited creature who despairs of the future of the British race.[10]

Cecil Rhodes expressed the same sentiment more lyrically: "As I walked, I looked up at the sky and down at the earth and I said to myself this should be British. And it came to me in that fine, exhilarating air that the British were the best race to rule the world."[11]

Henty could not have agreed more, and it is not surprising therefore that the Dutch rivals of the British in South Africa should have become the objects of his scorn. Admittedly, the Boers were good horsemen and cut a fine figure while young, but "in after-life they often became heavy" (*The Young Colonists*). They were "brave and tenacious when fighting under the cover of rocks," but "had not the heart to venture even once to face the British in the open" (*With Roberts in Pretoria*). The Boers were "an inferior race almost without even the elements of civilisation, ignorant and brutal beyond any existing white community" (*With Buller in Natal*). Not only that, the Boers were dirty and unsavoury in appearance. They slept in their clothes and only gave themselves a shake upon arising. On very exceptional occasions they would rub themselves with water. However, Henty admitted, with some charity, that "four times in the year... the Boers indulge in a general wash." As for education, the Boers, by and large, had none; and "very many Boers are scarcely able to sign their names." The difference between an Englishman and a Boer is clearly depicted in the same passage: "The Boers, as they rode up, leapt from their horses, and with shouts of exultation walked along the wagons, striking at the men, hurling every epithet of contempt and hatred at them, even spitting at them. Many of the women were also struck, as well as being grossly insulted." Deeply incensed, the virtuous Cairns, an English captive, cried: "And these scoundrels call themselves Christian men, and their friends speak of them as simple pious farmers! I call them, both from their appearance and their actions, as unmitigated a set of ruffians as are to be found on the face of the globe."

LIFE was uncomplicated for Henty, and it held few mysteries. The difference between right and wrong, virtue and vice was always clearly discernible. To Henty, when all is said and done, imperialism was the achievement of great-hearted and noble men acting mightily in a most worthy cause. That he was a dull and repetitive writer did not seem to disturb his readers. In recent press notices I note that both J. Paul Getty, the prototype of a billionaire, and Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., the recently deceased dean of American liberal historians, have admitted to being "greatly influenced" by Henty's works.

Henty's own adventurous career, his large frame and bearded face, personified the self-confidence of late Victorian England. In the eyes of many British subjects, their nation, peopled by a race unique in physical and spiritual attributes, had reached the apogee of civilisation. Its invincible arms enforced, for the benefit of the world as a whole, the policies of an enlightened government serving a virtuous queen. Certainly Henty's ideas, or the bright imperial image he drew, were not original. His importance lies rather in the extent to which he heightened and tinted with life an already existing stereotype and so coloured the attitudes and opinions of future generations of British and, for that matter, American schoolboys.

[10] Speech at the Imperial Institute, 11 Nov. 1895; in Bennett, *The Concept of Empire*, p. 315.

[11] Basil Williams, *Cecil Rhodes* (London, 1938), p. 55.

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THEATRE

Dr. Miller's Transplant

By John Weightman

THE WONDERFUL THING about Shakespeare is that he is practically unbreakable. Stretch him this way and that, turn him upside down, inflate some characters and deflate others, do all the men as women and all the women as men, make him pop or baroque or existentialist, and he survives just as well as when it was the fashion to make him the perfect English gentleman, the patriot, the Christian. "Others abide our question, thou art free"—free to be turned into anything that the spirit of the times or the genius of the producer happens to be concerned with. The explanation, I suppose, is that Shakespeare operates at a quite unusual level of intellectual interchangeability; he has no opinions, prejudices, or contours, only marvellously expressed perceptions arranged in loose masses which are open to infinite manipulation. Thus Jonathan Miller is able to take *The Merchant of Venice* out of the 16th century, that is out of the violence and colourfulness of the Renaissance, and reset it in the late 19th century or *belle époque* period, the great philistine epoch following the Industrial Revolution, and it still functions up to a point. True, it shudders and jumps, and there are considerable phenomena of rejection, yet for the duration of the evening the experiment is an acceptable and fascinating one.

But why, it may be asked, was such an experiment necessary? The reason is, no doubt, that Shakespeare's one and only treatment of the Jewish question is now rather difficult to handle in a straight manner. It would be embarrassing to do Shylock traditionally, as a bearded figure in exotic garb snarling out his hatred of the Christians. Our present concern with the racial question creates no difficulty with Othello; he can be presented as a race-conscious blackamoor, because there is no irredeemable evil in his character, and in any case the main burden of guilt is borne by the enigmatic, and quite European, Iago. But Shylock, in Shakespeare's text, is clearly a diabolic pole of the action, in contrast to the strong, white radiance of Portia. He still has a great deal of the medieval monster about him, and as he whets his knife on the sole of his shoe in ghoulish preparation for revenge, he is meant to thrill the audience with memories of all the dark sacrifices the Jews were supposed to indulge in. He is a blood-thirsty bigot, living in a state of war with the Gentiles, and only tolerated by them because he fulfils a necessary and despised role, like an Untouchable. It is true that he has a beautiful daughter who elopes with a Gentile and is received into polite society, but it is frequently the case that mythic monsters have beautiful daughters, since the fear inspired by the monster can stimulate sexual interest in the beauty that has come from the beast.

In short, Shakespeare quite frankly accepts anti-Semitism in those places where he exploits the traditional concept of the Jew. Of course, he offsets this concession to popular feeling by the big speeches in which Shylock asserts his common humanity, but the play, on a literal reading, is weighted against the Jew, as was no doubt inevitable in the religious and sociological conditions of the time. The virtuous Antonio spits on Shylock as a matter of course, the clown Gobbo is keen to leave him, his daughter abandons him without a qualm, the Duke speaks to him with dignified contempt, and Portia not only gets the better of him in the trial scene, like a virgin quelling a dragon, but also reduces him to poverty and abjuration. Then Gentile society, after expelling the Jewish monster from within its midst, enjoys a happy postlude of poetry and music, full of classical references—"In such a night as this...." The play can be read as a sort of cleansing ceremony and if, even so, Shylock rather than Portia remains the dominant figure, this is because the Devil always tends to steal the show when he gets half a chance, and Shakespeare is too good a writer not to give him a whole chance.

DR. MILLER UNDERTAKES to turn this anti-Semitic play, if not into a frankly pro-Semitic one, which would be too sentimental a thing to do, at least into an "unpleasant" one, in which all the characters are tarred more or less with the same brush. The first effect of transferring the action to the late 19th century is that the gap between Jew and Gentile is immediately narrowed. Instead of being an exotic figure from the ghetto, Shylock looks like a gentleman on the Stock Exchange, in fact exactly like the orthodox English Jews I see every Jewish holiday going past my window in their Sabbath best on their way to the synagogue. Sir Lawrence Olivier does a perfect imitation of the first- or second-generation immigrant with a business in the City and a house in Ranulf Road. This makes nonsense of a number of lines in the play about the radical difference between Antonio, who is "The Merchant of

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Venice" of the title and Shylock, the usurer. Shakespeare's monster labours under the weight of the Church's reprobation, because he lives on usury. No doubt, by the time of the Renaissance, many hidden forms of usury were practised by Christian merchants, but the official condemnation still survived. At any rate, Shakespeare takes it as being fully valid. Antonio lends money without interest, and the business of the pound of flesh (which Shakespeare picked up from traditional sources, as he picked up the story of the three caskets) is more credible if we see it as a mythic reaction to the horror of usury. Antonio can accept the stipulated form of compensation as a grim Jewish/Christian jest, precisely because he is not used to thinking in terms of interest and can therefore conceive of the pound of flesh as a kind of metaphor. But by the end of the 19th century, usury was a universally accepted principle, the Jews were perfectly integrated in this respect, or rather Christian society had been integrated to them, Disraeli had been Prime Minister, Edward VII had close Jewish friends, the Rothschilds were at the height of their power, and so on. It is impossible to imagine a rich, 19th-century Jew whetting his knife on the sole of his boot to carve his due out of a Christian, and in fact Dr. Miller has to transfer the gesture from Shylock to an assistant. Dr. Miller may argue that the knife and the pound of flesh remain valid as symbols of the hostility still latent between Jew and Gentile. This is quite true, but a serious credibility gap arises from the fact that the Gentiles have to speak as if usury were foreign to them, when their dress proclaims that they are living in the heyday of capitalism. This is the major difficulty that Dr. Miller has not managed to solve. Since both Shylock and Antonio are in 19th-century dress, they cannot speak to each other as if they belonged to different worlds, yet Shakespeare's rhetoric and symbolism are based on the assumption that they do. Therefore the two actors, Sir Lawrence Olivier and Anthony Nicholls, have to give muted performances which, however interesting, impose a strain on the actual language of the text.

While thus scaling Shylock down from the status of medieval monster to the more comprehensible role of sardonic, literal-minded, modern English Jew, Dr. Miller subtly discredits the Gentiles by undermining their poetry and introducing a strong element of "Beyond the Fringe" farce into the action. Frequently, when a character launches into a purple passage, background music strikes up in such a way as to make the lyricism just a shade too sweet to be tolerable. What, in Shakespeare's text, is presumably meant as direct enjoyment of lyrical emotion is pushed, by the 19th-century music, in the direction of Victorian phoneyness. A doubt is cast on Bassanio's feeling for Portia by the musical underlining of "*In Belmont is a lady richly left.*" "*Tell me where is fancy bred*" becomes a hilarious ballad sung by two simpering ladies. Even the transcendent lyricism of Act V, Scene I—

In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand...

is brilliantly ruined by Lorenzo being made to pace up and down with a pipe in his mouth, like an enthusiastic but slightly crass *Eng. Lit.* don quoting Shakespeare rather than acting him. In a sense, this is beautifully effective, because it emphasises the fact that Shakespeare is not at all scrupulous about where he brings in his poetry. It doesn't necessarily reinforce truth of character or situation, but may be stuffed in in handfuls simply to elevate the mood. Dr. Miller doesn't want the Gentile characters to benefit indiscriminately from such an advantage, and so he systematically sabotages their higher flights. He goes so far as to extinguish Portia's great solo: "*The quality of mercy is not strained....*" I imagine that most famous actresses of the past must have stood in the attitude of the Statue of Liberty to declaim this tirade; Miss Plowright leans across the table and, in a flat voice, develops the argument exactly in the manner used by Mrs. Barbara Castle when, as Minister for Transport, she defended the merits of the breathalyser on television.

The general effect of this process is to tarnish Shylock's adversaries. Bassanio is a rather jaded playboy who borrows three thousand ducats in order to court a wealthy heiress and so restore his fortunes. Portia is a mature, bustling lady who knows exactly which pretty young man she wants and immediately takes control of his life, although she makes a formal statement of submission. Lorenzo, Gratiano, etc., are all part of a rather heartless, upper-class set who look upon the disagreement with the Jew as an episode which interrupts the even tenor of their privileged lives. The only profoundly serious, metaphysical character is Shylock; when he has been defeated, browbeaten, deprived of his possessions and forced into apostasy, he staggers off into the wings and sets up a howl of pain comparable to the bellowing of Oedipus in the moment of tragic revelation. This howl is echoed right at the end of the play when, contrary to any indication given by Shakespeare, Jessica is left on the stage to muse alone while a Jewish chant rises in the silence. As Dr. Miller has arranged things, this chant sounds genuine, whereas the neo-Platonic ecstasy which had preceded it by a few minutes—

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Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold....

was made to seem like Pre-Raphaelite decoration. It is really a considerable achievement to stand Shakespeare on his head in this way on the stage of the National Theatre, with the co-operation of such a body of remarkable actors.

DR. MILLER'S VIGOROUS SHIFTING of the emphasis reminds us again of some curious incidental features of the play. Perhaps they are just accidents, resulting from the fact that Shakespeare threw the borrowed elements together with more concern for immediate theatrical excitement than for fundamental coherence. But with him one can never be sure; they may be mysterious quirks of genius.

The story of the caskets is the main puzzle. Is it just a lot of nonsense that cannot be significantly related to the main action? Dr. Miller treats it as such and gets some of his funniest effects by guying the two unsuccessful suitors. The Prince of Morocco is turned into a naive, loud-mouthed barbarian (a touch of anti-wog racialism here?), while the Prince of Aragon becomes a doddering, sententious ancient who brings the house down with a lot of business about putting endless lumps of sugar into his coffee-cup. There is no need to listen to what they actually say; they create their impact merely through their comic stage presence. And since they are completely ridiculous, they devalue the whole operation. It is a foregone conclusion that Bassanio will choose rightly because, impoverished though he is, he is the only man in the running. In any case, Portia has already chosen him, and it is difficult to believe that such a strong-minded lady is really subject to an irrational condition laid down in her father's will. Moreover, the test itself is childish; how can such an international series of suitors have consistently chosen the wrong caskets? Portia dismisses the earlier ones as fools when she describes them to Nerissa, but why should she be courted only by nitwits if, as Bassanio says,

... the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors...?

But perhaps it is significant that, in Shakespeare's text, the two visible suitors, the Princes of Morocco and Aragon, are *not* figures of fun; they are bombastic heroes who might have come out of a tale of chivalry, and they have a touch of unreality about them, when they are compared to Bassanio.

Suppose we say that the casket business is not nonsense, to be "Beyond-The-Fringed" to the last degree to make it tolerable for a modern audience, but myth, or perhaps more accurately a mixture of myth and realism characteristic of the transition from the medieval to the Renaissance world? Bassanio, after a hectic youth, is attracted to the lady who is going to save him both materially and emotionally, and she is the first woman who is more important to him than Antonio. She is a princess in the tower of Belmont, only to be reached by the knight who successfully passes a ritual test imposed by her father. It can happen that even a strong-minded woman has been so conditioned by her father that she is only free to choose according to the concept of maleness she has derived from him. Portia's viciousness about the earlier suitors may be an expression of her sexual impatience while she is waiting for the man she knows to be the right one. Also, all women are caskets, to be unlocked rightly or wrongly according to the behaviour of the man. One would expect an affinity between Portia and the gold casket, because her locks—

Hang on her temples like a golden fleece....

yet she does not respond to the gold and silver of high romance. The man who gets her is neither Morocco nor Aragon, who opt for gold and silver, but Bassanio (much in need of gold and silver) who opts for the workaday realism of lead. Why? Perhaps because there is a fundamental, mysterious prosiness about the sexual relationship, which is stronger than the illusions of romance. And this prosiness may not be simply economic, although economics come into it; it is a sort of resolved hostility, such as is represented by the amiable bickering about the ring, which intrudes so surprisingly on the trial scene.

IT MAY WELL BE that my suggestions are nonsense too, but I feel that Shakespeare was getting at something deeper than mere nonsense in all this. It is important for the balance of the play that Portia, like Shylock, should move between myth and realism. If she is depoeticised from the start and turned into a straightforwardly competent, not-suffering-fools-gladly sort of person, such as Miss Plowright is bound to present in this production, she no longer comes down from the heights of allegorical sublimity to the middle ground of humanity for the meeting with Shylock, who has come up from the lower depths. She needs to be both allegorical Lady and woman, if she is to make sense of the various levels of action through which she passes. Dr. Miller shows that Shakespeare's poetry is not always to be taken at its face value, and this is a major strength; but I wonder if the pattern of ironies and sublimities is not a good deal more complex than his interpretation allows.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Lenin's Heritage

By Leonard Schapiro

TYRANNY, brutality, and injustice are associated with Communists of all kinds, from China to Peru, in the past fifty years. For how much of this is Lenin to be blamed? From the days of Trotsky in the 1920s to those of the New Left in the '70s Lenin has been made to appear as the true saviour, betrayed by his epigones, who would have inaugurated the golden age of free, unalienated, socialist man. How far is this true? Now, of course, no one in his senses would equate in terms of human qualities, of intelligence or integrity Lenin, on the one hand, with a Brezhnev or a Jacques Duclos or a Walter Ulbricht, on the other. Lenin certainly invented and created the *apparat* —the hard core of disciplined party professionals who are intended to enable the party to manipulate and control the entire country. Much of his writing after 1900 was concentrated precisely on the importance of this kind of party. But Lenin himself never became what is usually described as an *apparatchik*—the skilled, quite unscrupulous manipulator, and one who is little more. For one thing Lenin always retained, even at the most critical moments of Bolshevik power (as in 1918 or in 1921), sufficient authority to persuade and rally his colleagues without resorting either to force or to fraud. Stalin was in an entirely different position. A man with little glory to his credit in the past, apparently undistinguished both in theory and in matters of practice, with enemies on all sides who, towards the end, quarrelled even with Lenin, could stay in power only by fraudulent manipulation and ultimately, when he felt confident enough, by wide-scale terror. There is, therefore, no need to question the view, often expressed, that had Lenin lived longer things would in all probability have been very different, both in Russia and outside.

But different in what respect—in degree or in kind? Certainly, individual liberty never formed any part of Lenin's doctrine except for purposes of polemics against the repressive character of the Tsarist régime. In 1902, in discussions about the party programme, Lenin is quite explicit: it is all right, he says, to promise the peasants all kinds of liberties during the period of the bourgeois revolution; when the socialist revolution takes place, they will turn against it, and will have to be forced. Repeatedly after 1905, he defined his idea of dictatorship as naked force, unrestrained by law of any kind. Terror was an integral part of Russian social democratic tradition, both Bolshevik and Menshevik: it was justified in the minds of these socialists by a rosy vision of the French Revolution. The class enemy would resist, and had to be destroyed. It was a natural step after 1917 to lump together as the "class enemy" the capitalist entrepreneur, the ex-police officer, the socialist who was critical of Bolshevik methods, and the peasant or worker exasperated by governmental brutality and incompetence. (The only difference was that the capitalist or ex-police officer, being more useful, stood a better chance of escaping alive.) There is no reason to suppose that Lenin thought differently in this respect, and indeed all the evidence suggests that he fully supported the need for terror right to the end of his active life.

NOW IT COULD BE ARGUED, and with some justice, that the dictatorship and the terror which Lenin envisaged before 1917 were regarded by him as a temporary necessity only. But what is to be regarded as temporary? (Forty years of terror would be needed, was what Lenin told one visiting socialist.) And, in any case, what was to succeed the temporary dictatorship and terror? In September 1917, before the seizure of power, and before the chances of it looked really promising, Lenin wrote his *State and Revolution*.[1] *State and Revolution* contains the vision of the kind of Utopia which Lenin claimed to promise. Of course, he argues, force in the form of the state, with its repressive mechanism, is necessary even after the victorious revolution: the class enemy has to be crushed. But the happy future is already in sight: the State begins to wither away immediately after the Revolution. Since the new revolutionary state power is supported by the overwhelming majority, the amount of force it has to use becomes decreasingly small. The need for rules and orders, where exploitation no longer exists, decreases: in the end there will be no need at all for rules, since all will readily and voluntarily accept the few restrictions which are required for the good life. Order will be enforced as easily as it is where passers-by intervene to protect a woman from being assaulted.

Did Lenin believe all this, Lenin, the practical

[1] He evidently attached great importance to it, because he made careful arrangements for the manuscript to be preserved "in case they bump us off." It was published in 1918, when the Bolsheviks were in power.

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creator of the *apparat* of the party—which, incidentally, is mentioned once only in passing in *State and Revolution*? Certainly, as time went on Lenin grew very impatient when reminded of what he had written in *State and Revolution* about the state "withering away," and about the way in which government could be carried on by any one. He also increasingly stressed after 1918 the need for state discipline and for repressive forces, and ceased to talk of the utopian vision of the William Morris world of the future—the "fairy tale," as Lenin called it, that anyone can run the state, although in fact the fairy tale had figured so prominently a few years before in *State and Revolution*. The "fairy tale," which derives from the works of Marx and Engels, is squarely based on the assumption that when the socialist revolution happens the overwhelming majority are on the side of the revolutionaries who seize power in their name. (Indeed Lenin made this assumption himself in September 1917 when he wrote *State and Revolution*.) The Bolshevik seizure of power two months later did not remotely resemble the revolution envisaged by Marx and by *State and Revolution*. It was a coup d'état by a minority which at most commanded support in the capital and a few centres elsewhere, but certainly not among the peasant majority of the country.

THE ELECTIONS to the Constituent Assembly (which Lenin eventually dispersed by force) which were held eighteen days after the Bolshevik seizure of power, proved this. In this election, probably the only really free election on a national scale held in Russia before or since, the country voted overwhelmingly for socialists of all kinds and against Communism. Now it is obvious that a minority striving to assert, as Lenin did, its own complete monopoly of power against a majority, can only do so by the increasing exercise of force. Besides, as Lenin himself recognised towards the end of his life, the Bolshevik seizure of power from the Provisional Government was, in Marxist terms, a premature seizure of power, an attempt to impose socialism before socialist consciousness and conditions were ripe for it. Both Marx and Engels had repeatedly condemned such an attempt, and Lenin himself recognised, writing in 1922, that he had not, as it were, acted according to the book. *"On s'engage, et puis—on voit,"* he had written in 1917 and now repeated, reflecting on what had happened. "Act first, and then see what happens," is a fair enough description of Lenin's policy in 1917: in 1922 he justified this policy by blaming the irresolute incompetence of the Provisional Government. One can see his point of view in this respect.

BUT, IN TRUTH, theory about freedom or dictatorship played little part in the development of Soviet institutions. Lenin was quite determined that he and his party (provided they followed his own views) were alone fit to govern, and that all others, socialists included, should be ousted from government by fair means or foul—he was not particular about the means. By 1921, when he had achieved monopoly of power for his party, party members began to jib at the strict discipline which the party machine demanded of them. Outside the party, peasants and workers alike were in a greater or lesser state of revolt against the rule of the communists. With some logic Lenin perceived that one cannot, as a communist rank-and-file member, expect freedom for self if one is at the same time actively engaged in denying it to others in the soviets or in the trade unions. And so, in March 1921, at the Tenth Party Congress, the foundations of the modern communist party in the Soviet state, and outside, were laid down. Freedom of debate was severely restricted, and unanimity was imposed by force through the rule outlawing factions on pain of expulsion. When Stalin became General Secretary a year later, he found the instruments of oppression all ready made for him.

This pragmatic indifference to individual liberty which characterised Lenin was not however, as it probably was in Stalin's case, merely a consequence of an overwhelming lust for power. Lenin believed in the message of Marx: that the proletarian state, by ending exploitation of man by man, would put an end to alienation, and would enable all men (except those who were misguided enough not to accept it) not only to live in freedom, but to enjoy the material means to do so. The realities of Soviet life after November 1917 no doubt made the Utopian vision recede even further: but it is unlikely that Lenin ever abandoned his faith. Certainly those who followed Lenin, or thought they were following Lenin, by joining one of the Communist parties which grew up after the Russian Revolution were in very many cases inspired by the same faith.

Is it, then, Marx who is to be held responsible for the things which can properly be objected to as reprehensible in communist rule? In one sense this would seem to be a very unjust identification. Marx's Utopia always depended on the premise that social conditions had become ripe for a social revolution: in particular, that the proletariat had, by the operation of the economic law which he expounded, become the overwhelming majority in the highly industrialised country to which alone Marx's analysis was intended to apply. Both Marx and Engels had repeatedly criticised premature

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seizure of power by revolutionaries who then proceeded to impose what they called Socialism by force. Lenin's revolution was in no sense in line with what Marx had written about. It took place in a country where the peasants were the great majority of the population, and it took place long before the proletariat had acquired the kind of political experience and consciousness which Marx had postulated for his imaginary revolution.

BUT, IN ANOTHER and more general sense, the link between Marx and Lenin is less remote. For both of them individual liberty was only a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Both of them believed (deriving their faith from Rousseau) that men could only be truly free in a state which was actually "their own" state, and not just a state in which they were represented. Within this self-delusion, "one's own state," there could be no need for the individual to be given the means to defend his right as an individual against the power of the state—since it was after all himself! Both Marx and Lenin believed that this ultimate freedom was only to be enjoyed by the proletariat and those who accepted its lead, and that all others could properly be deprived of all liberty and rights. Both believed in dogmatic certainty, and in intolerance as a virtue. But the liberty of the individual can only exist where it is an end in itself—and the supreme end at that. Liberty will, moreover, only survive where those who enjoy it wage a constant struggle not only to preserve their own liberty against encroachment but to extend it to those who do not yet enjoy it.

> Freedom for supporters of the government only, for the members of one party only... is no freedom at all. Freedom is always freedom for the man who thinks differently.

Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of Bolshevism (written in 1918—what would she have said in 1921?) still retains its validity. Liberty cannot be made subordinate to other aims without losing both liberty, and, as often as not, the other aims as well. In the words of de Tocqueville, "those who seek in liberty anything other than liberty itself are destined for servitude."

Of Heretics & Intellectuals

An Interview with IGNAZIO SILONE

ANYONE who, like you, took part in the founding of the Italian Communist Party in 1921 and left it in the '30s, at the beginning of the Stalinist degeneration, will probably agree with Raymond Aron's sarcastic remarks about Sartre and other intellectuals' tardy admission that they had been "mistaken."

SILONE: Quite honestly, this isn't what concerns me most in this subject. First of all, I want to make it quite clear that I personally was in no way ahead of them. Apart from the fact that we belong to different generations, I don't think minds can be synchronised like watches. Besides, it isn't a case of individuals, however well known. What is happening in many Communist parties is a real *scisma*, something that will expand those involved in it and its critical concern with serious basic problems.

—But the rebels are nearly always "intellectuals."

SILONE: The initiative is often taken in public by intellectuals, but what about, say, the metal workers' union in Prague? And then, which intellectuals do you mean? Among them you find not only revisionist sympathisers and liberal fellow-travellers but men like Roger Garaudy, Ernst Fischer, Adam Schaff and others, who were front-rank organisers and militants in the Party; spiritual leaders, like Ernst Bloch, whose whole life has been devoted to the philosophy of socialism; and entire ruling groups, like the editors of the *Literarni Noviny* in Prague. It may seem a paradox that, just when the intellectuals were said to be in decline, movements that have shaken the whole political framework have arisen among them. The role of the Czech weekly was directly connected with that of the

IGNAZIO SILONE—*born in the Abruzzi on 1 May 1900—has recently celebrated his seventieth birthday. Among his books are "Fontamara" (1930) and "Secret of Luca" (1959) both published in new editions by Cape, and "Bread and Wine" (1937), and "Emergency Exit" (1969), published by Gollancz. He was a contributor to Richard Crossman's famous "The God that Failed" (1950). A new and revised edition of his pre-war "School for Dictators" was recently published. His two articles on "Re-Thinking Progress" were published in* ENCOUNTER *(April and May 1968). "The Story of a Humble Christian," a biography in dramatic form, will be published this year by Gollancz.*

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revolutionary Petöfi Circle in the Budapest of 1956. Antony Liehm has quite rightly said that his literary review cast the first gleams of light in Prague. After a few weeks of surprise and hesitation at the audacity of some of its appeals, ordinary people came to realise that the writers and philosophers were expressing everyone's secret thoughts. This happened in other places too. In other words, you might say that it was dictatorship that put the intelligentsia back into the vanguard, where they had been up to 1848 but not since. By suppressing freedom and the rights of man, the dictatorships restored the claims of the so-called "bourgeois" revolution. This is a heritage which concerned everyone, but men of letters, at least on the Left, are its most sensitive interpreters.

—Yet it was only after the dramatic Soviet military invasion of Czechoslovakia that the protest widened.

SILONE: Yes, it did, after that masterpiece of military strategy, with its theoretical corollary that the satellite countries have only a limited degree of sovereignty in their relations with Russia. What kind of internationalism was it advancing? A policy that can be defined by recalling that Russia made the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact in 1939; that later it was first in favour of, then against, the Chinese People's Republic—even going as far as to threaten war; first against, then in favour of, Gaullism; first in favour of, then against, the State of Israel; and so on, supporting some States in the Third World and opposing others which have an identical social structure. There is no point in seeking consistency, or anything that could justify international solidarity, in such a shamelessly chauvinistic policy.

But what Russia has been reduced to internally under Brezhnev and Kosygin we know—in spite of a ferocious censorship that recalls that of Zdanov—from Solzhenitzyn, Sinyavsky, Daniel, Ginsburg, Grigorenko, and even moderates like Tvardovsky. The decline is general. Official ideology has become a deceptive kind of state religion, and one that has taken over (and discredited) the name of Marxism. The Party which—as conceived even by Lenin—was to control bureaucracy and guarantee the leadership of the working classes, has for a long time been integrated with the governmental machine, from top to bottom, and no one controls those who do the controlling. Finally, the hierarchically organised class that directs and administers the economy has become a hereditary one, and this is what has done most to divide the people into opposing classes and castes. Before seeking for the remains of socialism in what actually transpires in Russia we should first make a pitiless criticism of its abuses. Once free of juridical and ideological pretence, there is the danger of discovering that precious little that is really new and revolutionary is left in the present conditions of the Russians workers and peasants.

—Do you think that the present dispute among the Communist leaders might have some lasting significance?

SILONE: Let's get back to the intellectuals. They have always been extremely important in the Communist organisation. Unlike the socialists, the Communist Party has always been very much concerned with them, and those it could not recruit directly it attached to itself as *compagni di strada,* fellow-travellers. Many people will remember what happened in Italy after the last war. In order to have access to the main publishing firms, to film production and to a number of university courses, many youngsters were compelled to humiliate themselves by joining the Communist Party; in this way, they also took on an aura of opposition, if not of martyrdom. But in the rest of Europe the Communist influence on the intelligentsia, new and old, went back a good deal further into the past. Anyone who really wants to find out about it should take the trouble to read, say, the minutes of the international congresses in Amsterdam or at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, which took place during the Spanish Civil War, under extremely influential men like Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, André Gide, and André Malraux (to name only the French). By the end of World War II many of them had gone from the scene, but the effect of their example survived. Recalling this may help towards an understanding of the special relationships then established between Left-wing intellectuals and Communism, and of the present revolt of Sartre and his colleagues.

—On another occasion you used the formula "the end of a pact" (fine d'un concordato).

SILONE: I think it can still be used. A pact of the kind I mean is a hybrid compromise of mutual aid between a political power and a spiritual power. In the relations between Russia under Stalin, Khrushchev or Brezhnev and the Western intellectual *élite,* this was perfectly clear: the intellectuals proclaimed that the Soviet state was the "incarnation of humanity's noblest aspirations," the "heir of the humanistic tradition," and that its constitution was "the most liberal and democratic ever known in history." Russia (and various Communist parties on its behalf) not only gave them the material benefits I have already mentioned but assured writers and artists, who are always saddened by isolation, "contact with the masses"

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and the illusion of being at the head of the most progressive movement on earth, in perfect harmony with history. The value of a novel, a painting, or a symphony was of course determined by the Party's critics, according to how much or how little its author participated in the *concordato*. One of the ritual obligations was to send messages of solidarity to victims of reactionary oppression—but to say nothing about the labour camps in Siberia. Disgusting displays of the kind will surely not be repeated in the near future—if only because the cumulative sense of shame has become too great.

—But later? Do you think the pattern could be reversed?

SILONE: Of course. I'm not talking about Italian electoral prospects, but about the decline of European institutions and ideologies. Can an institution in crisis return to being a free and liberal movement? Can a formalised ideology emerge once again as a part of a progressive enlightenment? No, a river never returns to its source—I'm sure of that, at least.

—Sartre, writing about Paul Nizan, once argued that "a solitary Communist is lost."

SILONE: You can't generalise about loneliness and company. It's something personal and psychological, and so it naturally varies a good deal. You can feel isolated as a card-carrying member of a popular party, and in harmony with the universe in a hermitage. That sentence of Sartre's (which he certainly wouldn't repeat now) is very much like the maxim: *Nulla salus extra Ecclesiam*. It depends on the church and on the situation which might make the opposite just as true: *Nulla salus in Ecclesia*. All the same, it's an advance that this time the Communist Party hasn't put out the ridiculous and stupid old choice of "Communism or Fascism." In the old times of the fascist era this was always advanced as: *"Rome or Moscow!"* Life has become more bearable because the elements of choice have grown. As Ernst Bloch, one of the noblest of socialist thinkers (and himself an ex-Communist), once wrote: "What matters is to learn to hope."

Letter from Paris

A New Sartre?

By François Bondy

SARTRE, of course, was a mature forty-year-old before he was attracted to politics, which until then had remained on the edge of his experience. Politics hardly concerned him at all at the time when his fellow student at the *Ecole Normale*, Paul Nizan, became a communist; he did not become politically involved when, in a Germany that was already Hitler's *Reich*, he studied philosophy; even when he was released from prisoner-of-war camp his relationship with the *Résistance* remained principally on a general anti-Nazi, socialist level, without any special commitments. These he developed later, when he edited and published *Les Temps Modernes* together with Maurice Merleau-Ponty. However, at precisely that time he moved closest in spirit to the then monolithic world communism of Stalin's last period, although Merleau-Ponty was already detaching himself and arriving at those critical considerations of *Les Aventures de la dialectique*, which displaced his earlier views on "Humanism and Terror," (these he himself later criticised as a subtle justification of the Moscow show-trials).

In those political years up to the turning point of October 1956—when he vigorously championed the cause of the Hungarian Revolution—Sartre parted company with numerous friends whose attitude towards the Soviet Union and the Communist movement had to him of late seemed *too* detached, *too* critical. The polemics of those times (he later regarded them as, in the main, "outmoded") were nonetheless included by Sartre in the various volumes of *Situations*. (He omitted, probably due to an oversight, an essay of 1949 on the necessity of European Unity in the face of American and Russian intimidation.) That the French proletariat, the Communist Party, and faith in the Soviet Union and Stalin must form an indivisible unity was a conviction which in the years 1948–1955 Sartre had formulated most precisely and explicitly without in the process sacrificing his formal independence—he did not join the Party—or his criticism as an existentialist of a Marxism which had become dogmatic and narrow-minded.

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THE STRUGGLE AGAINST colonial régimes prompted him to the sharpest possible condemnation of France in both Indo-China and Algeria (as well as of the Americans in the Viet Nam war). In this he was more consistent than the French Communist Party itself. By contributing the foreword to Frantz Fanon's famous book Sartre helped the prophet of colonial upheaval to a significant public resonance. In the first, gigantic volume of his *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* Sartre undertook to lay a theoretical foundation for his political attitude. There, to be sure, he revealed himself as being closer to anarchism than to communism. He mistrusts all institutions and party machines, which merely paralyse the masses and put "practical inertia" in the place of revolutionary energy. He turns against all forms of elections and points to those great moments in history when the masses themselves —and not just their representatives—take action, and they then become a "*groupe*" instead of a passive "*serie*."

In the last year or so several interviews and essays have been published which reveal a Sartre who is partly the same and partly changed and more critical towards his own old positions. These new pronouncements could fill a new volume of *Situations* and would then form a basis for discussion in a way that the following drastically abbreviated résumé cannot offer.

On 3 March 1969 Sartre gave his views on the events of May 1968, in which the coincidence of the student unrest and the massive strike almost brought down de Gaulle's government. He warned the students not to accept the reforms offered by Education Minister Edgar Faure which the National Assembly had unanimously endorsed. "You must fight, yes, you must fight. Violence against violence. . . ." They must persist in "revolutionary refusal" against all forms of participation and join in with the revolt of youth against "those hardened, decayed, shattered children called adults." Culture, particularly history and literature, must be totally governed by "Practice"; everything else is to be regarded as "selective compulsion" and "humanistic illusion." According to Sartre, "Culture is the new 'Practice' which elucidates itself in defining what it is doing." All other knowledge would make the students into slaves of monopoly capitalism.

It was a passionate confession to a sort of permanent cultural revolution against traditional bourgeois education and its institutions. If Sartre had, despite his taking their side in May 1968, found little response among the young members of the "New Left"—Herbert Marcuse and, in France, Henri Lefebvre commanded more attention—then he placed himself in a position which was diametrically opposed to theirs by his attitude to the conflict between Israel and the Arabs (to which he had previously devoted an extensive issue of *Temps Modernes*, which had appeared immediately after the Six-Days-War). He has also expressed his opinions on the matter in a conversation with Arturo Schwarz, editor of the Milan journal *Quaderni del Medio Oriente*. This conversation was reprinted in October 1969 in the Jewish magazine *Arche* in Paris. Sartre has tried to remain objective in this conflict. He sees the collision between two just causes, whereas in France (and not only here) the "New Left" overwhelmingly declared its solidarity with the Arabs and in particular with El Fatah, and condemned Israel as an "outpost of imperialism." For Sartre the threatened extinction of the State of Israel remains an absolute danger, a disastrous project which must be opposed (although he reproaches the State of Israel for displaying recently more inclination towards a "capitalist" than a "socialist" economic structure). "Israel was not the aggressor," he has concluded, and the annihilation of minorities such as Israel in the middle of the Arab world would lead to as little real progress "as Stalinism did to socialism." In the case of the Middle East conflict, as in Biafra, an "objective complicity" had begun to develop between the Western Powers and the similarly imperialistic Soviet Union.

A new development in Sartre's position was to be found in a long interview for the *New Left Review* of which *Le Nouvel Observateur* (16.1) has given a much more complete rendering. This is a backward glance over his own career, and the French weekly published it under the rather too sensational title "SARTRE VERSUS SARTRE." Sartre explains here that the class struggle is for him *still* the basic factor, precisely as it was for Marx. "There still remains the same struggle between the same classes, and the way to victory remains the same. . . ." On the question of the Chinese cultural revolution Sartre, who admits that he is not really adequately informed, declares himself to be disturbed by a contradiction: "To preach total freedom of the individuals within a group and at the same time to put into the brains of these individuals those pebbles known as the Thoughts of Mao is wholly incongruous. . . ." The French Communist Party is for him "the most conservative party in France." Sartre fears the possible bureaucratic distortion of a revolution which would triumph in a Western country. For his own part, he says he will not write a continuation of the autobiography begun with *Les Mots* (*Words*) but a "political testament," by which he does not mean advice but rather a report on the end of a life. "I shall show how a man can enter politics, and in particular what sort of mistakes I made and what has followed from them. . . ."

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A FOURTH REPORT of the political Sartre is his introduction to the French edition of the book by Antonin Liehm, *Trois Générations* (Gallimard). He entitled this introduction: "The Socialism that Came in from the Cold."

Sartre calls this socialism simply the "Thing," portraying it as a dehumanised petrified order which is no longer capable of improvement or reformation. The peoples who are burdened by the "Thing" should rise up, seize control of it, in order to throw it on to the rubbish heap. This sort of organisation—he writes—follows its own logic, and in its manner of total repression it has not "degenerated" but on the contrary remains true to its innermost nature. Henceforth, as in the West, the old structures must be destroyed and new ones created—but at the same time it must always be ensured that our future does not resemble this form of socialism. Apparently Sartre did not develop this troubled reservation about a revolution in the West, which could lead to *less* freedom, until he was outraged and depressed by the occupation of Czechoslovakia.

IN THE *Temps Modernes* of January 1970 there appeared a conversation between Sartre and certain unnamed members of the Italian Communist opposition group "*Il Manifesto*." In this connection one might recall that Sartre was a friend of Togliatti and that he has constantly confronted the French Communists with the example of the open-mindedness of their Italian comrades. Once, according to Sartre, he regarded American imperialism as the arch-fiend and felt himself obliged to support its opponents unconditionally. Today he sees in the Soviet Union, too, a form of imperialism and thus contradicts his own attitude of 1952. He adds—and this may well disappoint his readers—"I have started to write an analysis of the Stalinist Soviet Union. It was to have formed part of the second volume of the *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, which however will probably never appear...." Now Sartre, like Marcuse, sees in Capitalism still more the creation of superfluous requirements which contribute in a deeper sense to the enslavement of the people than the repression and exploitation of the labour process. (Alas, the philosopher cites as his only example of unfortunate consumer coercion and artificially-created needs—the automobile.)

Sartre admits that his own Utopia is not only the abolition of the State but of all politics in its hitherto accepted meaning in favour of a total self-administration. Between the necessity of a disciplined Revolutionary party and the danger of its petrification through the repression of spontaneous new experiments and ideas Sartre sees a constant tension; it remains a contradiction from which, he says, he still does not see any way out.

WHAT can be deduced from these recent statements? Sartre remains revolutionary in face of "Capitalist Society" and "Bourgeois Culture," but is now equally revolutionary towards any form of totalitarian socialism (and he no longer exempts even Yugoslavia from his criticism). He thinks in the West more of "Alienation" than of "Scarcity" (which was still in his *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* the basic category). His abhorrence of a totalitarian communism is a curious mix of partly liberal and partly libertarian analysis. In his hectic years of engagement from 1949 to 1956 Sartre gave the impression of being as overpolitical as he had previously been unpolitical. This abrupt to-and-fro between extreme involvement and cool disinclination is still conspicuous, indeed remains as clear as the inner relationship between these two only seemingly opposed attitudes.

Sartre recommends that young people should not study history. "What benefit can you get from learning something about the Punic Wars or the Crusades...?" But he himself sees his way rather as historical. His positions are now more finely shaded than ever before. He is partly still an extreme activist, partly however—and to a greater degree than ever before—a restless self-critical conscience.

Struggle, certainly. But what he is now worried about is to avoid certain undesirable results of the great struggle. Sartre once called any criticism of Stalinism tantamount to "robbing the Billancourt workers of hope." Today he regards such criticism as absolutely necessary. Instead of "Revolution at *any* price" he now says "Revolution, yes, but *not* at the price of ending up with a society which is totally impersonalised, which only expropriates and alienates people in a different way...." Thus his new positions are at once battle-cry and reflection. For a quarter of a century Jean-Paul Sartre has been a politically committed thinker. He still is, today; but it does look as if he is now just as committed to ideas, to theory, to thought itself—as a process of differentiation and of assimilation of manifold historical experience—as he used to be to action, to commitment, to "Practice."

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On Fig Leaves

By Benn W. Levy

IN HER LATEST PRONOUNCEMENT upon the difficult issue of pornography, Miss Pamela Hansford Johnson writes, "It is obvious that the whole debate arouses the most furious emotions." Very soon the truth of this becomes evident. I suppose I should know better than to argue with an angry woman, ejaculating "Tush!" and "What impudence!" But, although I am not so "Panglossian" as to believe her corrigible, I cannot refrain from a modest attempt to rescue the case put forward by the Arts Council's Working Party from the smog in which she has enveloped it. I make no complaint that Miss Hansford Johnson's approach is emotional rather than rational except insofar as it is always hard to argue with an exclamation mark.

It is hard too to contend against a welter of bald *ex cathedra* statements. She tells us that "We are going too far and too fast"; that sexual display is "cheapening"; that it is permissible (apparently) for authors to fictionalise horrors already documented but not to fantasticate imaginary ones, as "we have horrors enough already"; that the growing acceptance of nudity is "puerile"; that Marlowe's *Faustus* "was thrown quite out of balance" by a naked Helen toddling across the stage (did she really toddle?); that those who believe that shock may carry some therapeutic value are "impudent"; that "The person who says, 'It doesn't hurt me, therefore it can't hurt you' is" (guess what!) "a kind of intellectual snob" (I read this one twice but there it was); that we "are raising ugliness all round us. No beauty, terrible or otherwise, is being born...."

This kind of thing affords little foothold for rational argument and, I suppose, is not intended to. It illuminates the writer more than the subject. It is Mrs. Mary Whitehouse's declaratory technique on a slightly more sophisticated level. But perhaps I may find a foothold elsewhere.

FIRST, I AGREE with Miss Hansford Johnson about the strange difficulty in sustaining dispassionate discussion. She is not unique in this. People on both sides can be found who react impatiently against unwelcome reasoning. If it is more common among the repressives than the permissives, that could be perhaps because they are secretly plagued by the unresolved problem of how far they really want to go and by what means, and are therefore irascibly evasive when pressed to commit themselves in concrete terms to concrete expedients which would immediately be open to rational criticism. It is safer and easier to emit a Cassandra-howl about "the way things are going" than to propose remedies. How to expurgate the arts, who shall do it and on what principle defined in what manner, these ultimate and essential questions are habitually by-passed for the very good reason that they are unanswerable—or at least so far unanswered. It is understandable that to be asked them should be irritating, for they are manifestly reasonable and relevant questions, whose answers should influence attitudes.

There are of course bold extremists like Professor Morse Peckham who argues that the great beauty of Obscenity Laws is precisely that they can never make sense and therefore provide police and magistrates and other politico-legal functionaries with the ideal opportunity for the exercise of that arbitrary power which is the essential hallmark of a stable society.

Miss Hansford Johnson, however, does not commit herself so far. Although she is not above taking a so popular swipe at "liberal intellectuals," she is anxious in the same breath to affirm her own membership of the club and is careful not to jeopardise it with even the mildest proposals for increased repression. In this I cannot see, lambaste me though she may, that her practical position is very different from my own. After all, the climax or anti-climax of her fulminations is merely the mild hope that, "if we start thinking in the right way, we may start doing the right thing for our rickety society." This clarion call may not excite my weary old heart to danger-point but I can endorse it, hoping additionally for enlightenment as to what the right thing is.

THIS *is the third contribution to the discussion of "The Pornography of Violence."*

PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON'S *article appeared in the February* ENCOUNTER, *and* JOHN CALDER'S *in the April.* MR. BENN W. LEVY *was a member of the Working Party of the Arts Council, and the actual author of its report recently published by André Deutsch (30s.) under the title "The Obscenity Laws." Mr. Levy is a former Labour M.P., and the author of many plays.*

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OF COURSE we differ about the interim position, for whereas I would abolish the Obscenity Acts for the reason that Professor Peckham defends them, Miss Hansford Johnson considers that for the present, as far as the laws are concerned, everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. It seems they are just exactly right—even though they are a complete dead letter in the matter of depicted violence. She would neither tighten them nor relax them. I cannot think why not. If they have no influence on the situation that she deplores, then they may as well go. *Cui bono?* If on the other hand their laxity contributes to it, then surely they should be amended. Or does she accept our view that there are overriding objections to a rigorous law designed to punish an indefinable crime?

I do not expect a plain answer. Her escape route is established. Her book *On Iniquity* was only designed "to ask questions." Her article was only designed to discuss the matter in "general terms." Besides, she "did not want to see any more censorship or any less, *until* [my italics] the effect of violence and sadistic sex, via television, the cinema screen and (to a lesser extent) books, had been thoroughly investigated."

But now, it seems, at long last, the effect *has* been established, thanks to the pioneering of the Eisenhower Commission. "We now have evidence enough, statistical and clinical," says Miss Hansford Johnson. And it is now "time enough to begin to draw some tentative conclusions." For action? Her own conclusions are still confined to the pious little hope quoted above.

Nevertheless, I pricked up my ears. The Eisenhower Report, apparently, was a treasury of "hard evidence." Excellent. Just what we had been looking for. If only they could have published their findings before we concluded ours! "They did not ask for opinions"—like the wretched Working Party, who even asked for Miss Hansford Johnson's—"but stated facts obtained from mass surveys." Eagerly I secured a copy of their Report.

But my hopes were short-lived. Miss Hansford Johnson had misrepresented their Report no less than our own. The Commission, exactly like ourselves, had not thought it reprehensible to listen to and quote the opinions of those whose experience entitled them to be heard; nor had they confined themselves to scientific or pseudo-scientific experimental, clinical studies. The only difference was that the Commission seems to have been highly selective about whom it consulted (or at least quoted), for opinion is presented implicitly as unanimous, whereas we quoted (and printed fully in Appendices,) protagonists on both sides of the argument. This, according to Miss Hansford Johnson's private vocabulary, betrayed our "bias." If, like the Commission, we had suppressed views that conflicted with her own, we too perhaps might have earned the accolade "factual."

In truth, the only factual statements in the Eisenhower Report drawn from mass surveys were those showing the very high incidence of violence in the mass media. Our own Report contained similar statistics to precisely the same effect. The Commission does *not* quote the currently rising crime-rate and assume that there is a direct causal connection between the two, though Miss Hansford Johnson of course does. But evidently the Commission knows the difference between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*. It avers, on the contrary,

> There is much that is not fully understood and little that is proven beyond a reasonable doubt about the full impact of the mass media. It is difficult to design studies linking human behaviour or personality formation to media content in view of the vast array of other variables in the social environment that converge to shape a person's conduct and values.

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We too emphasised this probably insuperable difficulty. As Lord Annan put it, "assessments of the anti-social effects of these things upon an individual could never be more than speculative because human behaviour was the result not of one but of a multiplicity of causes."

But Miss Hansford Johnson's "beaming optimism," if I may borrow her vivid phrase, overrides these two moderate and, on the face of it, not very controversial statements. All we need, she says, is "a little patience" and all shall be revealed to us. (So perhaps, after all, it has not been revealed as yet.) Meanwhile we must accept her assurance that the revelation, when it comes, will vindicate her own prejudgment. What I tell you three times is true.

I REGRET that John Calder in an article that otherwise I find persuasive appears to share this simple faith in the revelations to be expected from statisticians and psychological research workers, though he does not of course assume foreknowledge of their findings. My own scepticism stems from the surely unanswerable proposition expressed in the quotations above from Lord Annan and the Eisenhower Report. But even if Mr. Halloran's study group (or another), given sufficient funds and another ten or fifteen years of time, which is the minimum period he mentioned for possible results, emphasising in all honesty that, even then, results were no more than a possibility; and supposing, too, that at the end of it all it were possible to demonstrate "beyond a reasonable doubt" not only the infectious consequences of depicted violence but also the statistical extent of the infection, what then? Do we set about the Augean task of expurgating all the arts, past, present and to come? And if we accept exceptions, which? And if we do discriminate, who is to be the discriminator? And how are we to evaluate the profit to society from protecting (and purifying?) the minority of psychopaths and corruptible non-psychopaths in danger and weigh that advantage against the social damage to be suffered from a wholesale spoliation of the arts? And are future artists to be confined to portraying life not as they see it but as someone (who?) thinks it ought to be? And if not, where is the line to be drawn? And by whom?

If Mr. Halloran should be successful, we have only ten or fifteen years in which to find answers to these old and stubborn questions. Miss Hansford Johnson may be sanguine, Mr. Calder rather less so and I not at all.

APROPOS OF FACTS, it is worth noting here that in America the crime rate has risen while the incidence of violence on mass media has dropped. I know not whether research workers build much on this or little. For my part I find nothing conclusive about it or even surprising. But Miss Hansford Johnson should be surprised out of her wits. Perhaps she was. Perhaps it explains her vehemence. Her respect for facts, however, does not compel her to mention this awkward discrepancy in the movement of what, on her assumption, ought to be parallel graphs. Perhaps it is only my bias that has led me to do so. But I cannot help thinking that Mr. Calder's correlation of crime and violence with personal, social and political frustration rather than with televiewing might be more conclusive if a graph could be undertaken.

ALAS, ANY EXPECTATION of "hard evidence" in the Eisenhower Report will be disappointed. There are a few vague references to "laboratory experiments" and "the vast majority of experimental studies" and "psychiatric and psychological literature," none of them specified. There is not even an appendix of sources to allow us an assessment of their value. This is all the more significant because, when they do have hard evidence (*i.e.*, on the analysis of violence in the mass media), they are quick to quote their authorities. But, apart from such figures which are common to both Reports, they had evidently been no more successful than ourselves in the search for hard evidence as distinct from opinion—or than the Danish Commission who had already ransacked the world for it in vain and whose investigations are not even mentioned in the Eisenhower Report.

However, Miss Hansford Johnson, having perhaps foreseen the possibility that someone else might read the American Report, has fully prepared herself for the contingency. Willing as ever to make the best of two worlds, she hedges her bet by informing us that hard evidence doesn't really matter after all and cannot even be expected. She writes, "you cannot prove moral harm as you can prove a proposition in physics or biology: therefore it is necessary to 'speculate' on some kind of an informed basis." So much for the hard evidence previously alleged to have been uncovered by the Eisenhower Commission. But what if the speculators differ, as they do and as the Working Party and the Danish Commission admitted?

I DO NOT EXPECT a plain answer; but let me underline the difficulty by citing a passage in Miss Hansford Johnson's own article, in which she criticises the "clean-up campaign" on the ground that their targets are not always her targets. She recalls their protests at a particular television play which she herself ruled to be

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"quite inoffensive." But who was right? This it never occurs to her to ask. Obviously both parties were untroubled by a doubt. Yet how is a censor or a law to reconcile their conflicting certitudes? The question is not merely whether to repress or not, but also what to repress.

This hard fact of subjective judgments and values in conflict is, of course, basic to the whole problem. Some people regard fig leaves as obscene, others regard genitals as obscene. Who is to control whom? Or, as the only other option, should we shoulder fully the responsibility (which, ultimately and effectively, is non-transferable in any case except in an infinitesimal degree), of controlling ourselves and influencing each other by precept and example? To dismiss this option, it seems to me, is to opt for force, which is not self-evidently a cure for violence.

Certainly the problem of subjectivity was not something that we as a Working Party could shrug off as Miss Hansford Johnson can. For we were charged with finding, if we could, a formula that could be used in law as a basis for just judgments on what would harm society and what would not—or, in legal parlance, what is and what is not obscene. Fig leaves or genitals? After a great deal of hard work we could devise no tenable definition; and certainly could find no existing one. One would have thought that the surest way for our critics to confound us would have been to supply the deficiency. But nothing has been forthcoming. For the most part they ignore the problem or, a few, deny its existence. Miss Hansford Johnson denies the difficulty of defining even what is "art" or "good taste." No problem. "We are perfectly used to sorting out the rubbish from the rest." Who in the world are "we"? Magistrates, by some lucky coincidence? Juries? Her next sentence suggests that the reliable authorities she has in mind are professional critics. But unfortunately they do not preside over obscenity trials, or perhaps fortunately, as history demonstrates that they are as fallible as the rest of us. Even when they are called as expert witnesses, they are liable to contradict each other and, when they don't, they are still liable to be ignored by the Courts. The same is true of psychological "experts." What criterion for repression does Miss Hansford Johnson propose? If she rejects repression altogether in favour of persuasion, then she aligns herself with the Bishop of Woolwich and, worse still, with the Working Party. I do not expect a plain answer.

THE THEORY held by some authorities (if there is such an animal in these fields) that the depiction of violence so far from inducing emulation may diminish aggressive impulses

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by vicarious satisfaction is one that Miss Hansford Johnson finds particularly provoking. The Eisenhower Report, she says, is "far too factual to be accused of the 'catharsis theory' bias so noticeable in the report of the Arts Council." Our bias consisted in reporting each of the two conflicting theories and withholding judgment in the absence of hard evidence on either side.

My own opinion (which is only "speculation on an informed basis" and was not voiced in the Report) is that out of the vast film, book and tele-viewing public the tiniest fraction may have their aggressions exorcised, that the tiniest fraction may be induced to emulation and that the overwhelming majority are unaffected. But, perhaps because my instinctive recoil from depicted violence is as strong as Miss Hansford Johnson's, I would echo her hopes for its elimination, though I know no better than she does how to set about it. Such hopes, of course, are wholly illogical because I know that violence will not vanish from the arts until it has vanished from life. Only the most innocent of optimists could think otherwise. Nor will fig leaves produce the miracle.

Depended from the above reference to the theory of catharsis Miss Hansford Johnson writes a footnote, which is surely a classic among non-sequiturs.

> It is fair to state *at this point* [my italics] that Lord Goodman was hoping for the reform of the Obscenity Laws and not the demand for total repeal.

It would have been fairer still to state that so was our Chairman and so were most of us; and that only the balance of argument after nine months' study forced us unanimously against the tide of our original inclinations. This information was available to Miss Hansford Johnson; it was even disclosed in the Chairman's Foreword. But perhaps, as she says, "there are certain states of fury which make reading an impossibility," let alone honest controversy.

In this connection I am impelled to refute certain allegations concerning the Bishop of Woolwich who seems to have become an unexpected football in the discussion. There is no ground whatever for imputing to us the patronising view of him as "a nice young man but an awkward one." (He is forty-one.) On the exact contrary, we wrote,

> He himself reminded us that repression could also be psychologically injurious.... [He had] his own view of sexual propriety... but, although he claimed the right to proselytise this view, he rejected... any claim to impose it by law on his fellow citizens; a self-denying ordinance which the Working Party fully endorses and seeks to emulate.

And which I dare to recommend to Miss Hansford Johnson and Mrs. Whitehouse.

The motive for misrepresenting our attitude is, of course, Miss Hansford Johnson's anxiety to insist that the Bishop (unlike herself?) is depraved and corrupted as a result of his reading, so she is outraged that we, having met him, should have ventured to express a doubt. In fact he himself, as John Calder recalls, particularly corrected us when the phrase was imputed to him and substituted the milder words "not unscathed." Well, nobody is unscathed, whether he has read *Last Exit* or not. Of *course* books are not "neutral." What is? Why pick on books? People can be gravely scathed by marriage and by friendships. But, although Victorian parents sought to exercise quite a strict censorship over both, it is possible that the attempt was as misguided as it was ineffectual. Alas, not only the arts but every aspect of experience, even schools and churches, can scathe us and there is little enough that we seem able to do about it, though doubtless the Bishop and Miss Hansford Johnson and even I will, in our various ways, go on trying. My own impression remains, however, very sincerely that the Bishop, a meticulously honest man, was one of the least depraved characters I have ever met. If that was our impression, I do not see why it was so naughty to record it, though I do see that it was vexing for Miss Hansford Johnson that we should have questioned the ornithological identification of the solitary swallow who was to prove her summer.

FINALLY, I should like to suggest a broader and deeper level on which the problem of obscenity might be profitably discussed.

"Society insists on its own safeguards," says Miss Hansford Johnson. Does it? I had thought the essence of her case was that society is doing nothing of the kind. That is why she and Mrs. Whitehouse feel called upon to intervene. What they want and what society wants are clearly different things; which doesn't, of course, mean that the two ladies are wrong and society right. It does remind us, however, that the commercial moguls of screen and television who dish out their super-abundant diet of violence, are motivated not by a rootless satanism but by their experienced assessment of what society demands, and that the Courts and the Home Office endorse this assessment. Otherwise the Obscenity Laws, designed howsoever inadequately to apply a brake, would not have been allowed to lapse, as far as violence is concerned, into a dead letter.

Now, as I cannot share the Panglossian faith that society is always wise enough to insist on its own safeguards, I have to ask whether the

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judgment of society in this matter is at fault, as it so often has been in the past, or whether error is in its critics.

There is an interesting and relevant passage in the Eisenhower Report.

> 40% of the poor black adolescents and 30% of the poor whites believe in the true-to-life nature of television content, as compared with only 15% of the middle-class white youngsters.

Assuming that the phrase "true-to-life" means what it says (and it can hardly be taken to mean a mere superficial verisimilitude or "naturalism"), I incline to the pessimistic view that the poor blacks and the poor whites are right and the bulk of middle-class whites wrong. For art, good or bad (bad, even more obviously) is not parthenogenetic. Ultimately the creative imagination has no source to draw upon, no parentage, but life itself. Even the crudest bestialities of books and screen and television would be meaningless, incomprehensible unless they reflected in various degree corresponding bestialities in ourselves. As a fellow-writer of fiction I cannot believe that Miss Hansford Johnson will dissent from this, in spite of the strange passage in which she reprimands Edward Bond and which seems to argue that only what has been documented in the newspapers is true and that all else is to be condemned as inadmissible fantasy.

If this is what she really means, I can only declare my contrary view that the inescapable function of all art is to reflect and illuminate life, that, having no other available raw material, it cannot do otherwise, that good art illuminates powerfully and sometimes even novelly and that bad art illuminates weakly and crudely. If the mirror that art holds up to life is, as I believe, in its essence neutral and amoral, it is inevitable that certain moralists should deplore the immoralities included in the reflection, especially (as I do) the enormous area in which we observe the ugliness of our own violence. But to deplore it is, none the less, as inept as it is to deplore the climate. Indeed it *is* the climate. It is too vast and impervious to be affected by tiny haphazard attempts at expurgation. A fig leaf cannot conceal a storm cloud, let alone dissolve it. It will not even adhere. Not Dr. Pangloss himself would have believed otherwise. Even to think in such terms seems to me a trivialisation of the mighty problem that violence presents.

IT MAY BE THAT the gulf between Miss Hansford Johnson and myself derives from our differing *a prioris*. She thinks in terms of degeneration, I of unregeneracy. Her view of society seems to be tinged with the concept of the once Golden Age, of the Noble Savage corrupted by the

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encroachment of civilisation. In the Golden Age he was blessedly without genitals. Now that he has acquired them, with some accelerating help from the mass media, what else can be done but recommend a fig leaf, for fear that exposure may corruptly multiply them?

By contrast, I myself maintain—continuing the same metaphor—that genitals are no novelty. I have come to believe in the doctrine of original sin. And this I equate with violence. Nor am I contradicted by "psychiatric and psychological literature"; nor by anthropologists nor by anyone who without sentimentality has observed an angry baby. I would even define civilisation, if it is to mean anything worth having, as the laborious attempt to mitigate our violent native propensities.

I wish I could persuade Miss Hansford Johnson to take the phenomenon of violence a little more seriously. It is the agent of death, no less. It threatens not only individuals but, in all likelihood, man as a species. It is ubiquitous and pervasive and innate. It is the air we breathe. Absence of it is unknown both in societies and in individuals. It is the product of fear and the cause of it. It is the universal scourge, the congenital disease.

Neither Miss Hansford Johnson nor I are immune to it, for its manifestations are not confined to the physical. In this at least she agrees with me since she accuses herself of raising her voice which she "regrets." Raising the voice is a fair enough metaphor for indulging one's aggressiveness, for the desire to inflict injury, for (in my terminology) original sin. As there was nothing to prevent Miss Hansford Johnson from amending the regretted aspects of her article, then either the regret was insincere or, more probably, the temptation was irresistible. My own failure to turn the other cheek is a similar example of unregeneracy. I cannot think expurgating the arts, even if it were practicable, would redeem either of us.

THE ONLY SERIOUS COUNTER to original sin is the developing consciousness directed against it. Civilisation, as it is called, is nothing less than the gallant, infinitely slow and perhaps hopeless Promethean attempt to resist and re-draft the laws of nature, not to conceal them.

The prospect may be discouraging to those who reduce the problem to a study of the annual ups-and-downs in the post-war crime rate of a given city but less so to those who find the perspective of recorded and deducible human history more significant. After all, it is only yesterday, a mere few thousand years ago, that the idea of non-violence as a code of behaviour began to germinate in man's consciousness, the idea that violence was his enemy and not his friend, that unbridled self-interest, the antithesis of love, is the root of all cruelty, that the use of violence, hitherto accepted as the weapon of self-preservation, could well lead to self-destruction. And, although these revolutionary paradoxes ran counter to all instincts and behavioural habits, they not only survived but have perceptibly prospered. Even within the butterfly span of my own life-time advances are discernible. The kids' noble slogan "Make love not war" would have been unthinkable in Kipling's day. There would have been no applause but only uniform disgust at the burning of draft cards. Pacifists faced social ostracism. Even Miss Hansford Johnson's estimable revulsion at cruelty would have been seen as soft-minded crankiness by her not distant forefathers who in juvenile literature, in schools, in sermons, in their modes of domestic discipline, in conditions of employment offered it to their own children without shame. Sex was shameful, not violence. The fact that Miss Hansford Johnson has reversed the emphasis is itself indicative, though she is evidently still a little hung up on the Victorian view of sex as "cheap" unless subjected to certain constrictions which seem arbitrary to many of her juniors and to myself.

IT IS CLEAR, therefore, that anyone who, like myself, regards the age-old problem of violence not as a little local difficulty but as the central and eternal problem of civilisation must be excused if he views with some impatience the proffered remedy of a fig leaf for the arts. The precept "*Hide it and it will cease to be*" is an excursion into optimism, beaming or otherwise, that cannot be dismissed as merely frivolous but innocuous, for by thus belittling the problem it could erode concern, comforting us with the illusion that we are doing something when we are doing nothing. Let Miss Hansford Johnson shift her attentions from the mirror of art to the dire human infirmity it reflects. She would be better employed in a pacifist sit-down in Trafalgar Square. A long-term contribution? Oh, yes. And possibly as inffectual even in the long term as fig leaves. But worth a try.

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The Zero at the Bone

On Ernst Jünger — By GEORGE STEINER

ERNST JÜNGER'S *In Stahlgewittern* (*"The Storm of Steel"*) appeared in 1920 and brought him immediate fame. It remains the most remarkable piece of *writing* to come out of the First World War. I emphasise "writing." Guy Chapman's *Passionate Prodigality* is a more penetrating, unbroken act of human perception; the political reach of Barbusse's *Le Feu* is greater. But Ernst Jünger came nearer than any other writer, nearer even than the poets, to forcing language into the mould of total war.

This is in part a matter of technique: the lapidary sentences, so different from the sinuous hesitance of normal German literary and philosophic prose, the violent similes, the play of graphic, uncontrolled turbulence against abstraction. In part it stems from Jünger's resolve to make the job of writing a counterpart to that of combat. War and his personal virtuosity at the game—seven times wounded, platoon leader Jünger received Germany's highest military award in September 1918—became the visionary core, the final touchstone of the entirety of Jünger's work. The chaotic hell of the Somme and Langemarck grew into more than a searing memory or an instance of life turned lunatic. The fire-storm of the big guns, the moon-landscape of craters and flares, the somnambular frenzies of hand-to-hand fighting, seemed to Jünger to compact certain essential truths and mysteries in man. After such battle there could be no peace, only an armistice. To write essays, poems or novels as if language itself had not passed through barbed wire and poisoned air, looked to Jünger like romantic evasion, like a bourgeois tactic at a time when the moorings of bourgeois civilisation had been fatally loosed. Though inextricably a part of violence, language was nevertheless the last zone of assured survival. In March 1943, in occupied Paris, Captain Jünger noted in his diary:

> When all buildings shall be destroyed, language will none the less persist. It will be a magic castle with towers and battlements, with primaeval vaults and passage-ways which none will ever search out. There, in deep galleries, *oubliettes* and mine-shafts it will be possible to find habitation and be lost to the world. Today that thought consoles me.

The notion of language as an absolute, as the locus of ultimate reality and survival, is one of the two mainsprings of Jünger's art. The other is the pursuit of the biological sciences. Beginning almost immediately after 1919, Jünger turned to the study of botany, of ichthyology and entomology. His acquaintance with crustaceans, lepidoptera, with endless varieties of coleoptera, gastropod molluscs and arachnids goes far beyond the amateur. Above all, Jünger is a passionate botaniser. There are few pages in his diaries and travel books, fewer still in his two allegoric fictions, on which we do not find some exact glimpse of plant-life. Victoria Regia blooms in the hot, battle-scarred marshes; the red woodland orchid "with the pale tip to the petals" shimmers in the dusk; a few days after learning of the death of his only son on the Italian front, Jünger observes the fibrous, yellow-green frond of blossoms on the hazel-bush outside his window. Many values relate to this taxonomic compulsion. Like André Gide, Jünger regards zoology and botany as a school for precise feeling; the eye of the beetle-hunter, of the collector of orchidaceae becomes as penetrating and scrupulous as that of the sniper. Having immersed himself in the wasteful destruction of men, Jünger finds a guarantor of reality in the tenacity and profusion of organic life. That low perennial herb *Convalaria majalis*, the lily of the valley, will blow cool and luminous when our concrete bunkers are dust. But plant morphology, the comparative study and classification of flora, has an even deeper meaning. Linnaeus is Ernst Jünger's tutelary spirit. Like Goethe, Jünger deems the classification of floral species to be a supreme metaphor of reason, of the secret concord between the image of order in the human soul

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and the realities of significant relations in nature. By assembling the great *Hortus Plantarum Mundi*, man comes as near as is possible to the lost Garden of creation. Moreover, to recognise plants by their sporophylls, as Linnaeus did, is to "read" an alphabet or cypher of life more ancient, more universal than any human idiom. In the tendril of the vine, in the hieroglyphs on the wings of the tiger-moth, the logic of creation is writ deep. The classic artist is one who can make his individual speech or form similarly suggestive of a hidden unity, of a total design of truth.

JÜNGER COMPLETED the manuscript of *On the Marble Cliffs* on 12 August 1939. A summer of exceptional radiance was drawing to a close. By the spring of 1940, some thirty-five thousand copies of *Auf den Marmorklippen* were in circulation. After that, the authorities stopped further printings. But the book was not harried methodically, let alone pulped or burned as were many others. Re-issued after the author's "amnesty" in 1948 (Jünger had refused to appear before a German "de-nazification" tribunal), the novel had, twenty years later, passed the hundred-thousand mark.

Home from a long war, the narrator and his brother Otho (they are brethren both in the flesh and in a fraternity of elect spirits) settle in a hermitage carved into a spur of the marble cliffs. Below them stretches the Marina, a beauteous lake bordered by a land of ancient cities, sanctuaries and vineyards. The two warrior-sages seek to spend their lives in botany and contemplation. In the chalice of the blue-starred gentian might lodge the inner penetralium, the secret towards which all magic, trance, alchemy and Kabbala direct their seemingly disparate but ultimately conjoined striving. In the Rue-Garden Hermitage dwell Erio, the elf-child of a brief erotic encounter which the narrator had in war-time, and his grandmother, the earth-witch Lampusa. A brood of lance-head vipers weave their golden, whistling round about the hermitage. The Marina is shadowed by black forests. Here rules the Head Ranger, a cunning, savage tyrant. His horde of thugs and killers are the Mauretanians; their raids and propaganda are undermining the ancient modes of cultured life in the land of Marina. Between Marina and Mauretania lies the Campagna, an intermediary terrain of steppes and rough pasture. It is inhabited by archaic, hospitable people and Belovar, their wild patriarch.

On the Marble Cliffs recounts the doom of this unstable triad. The herdsmen of the Cam-

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pagna are deserting their pastoral deities; strange enervations fester in the Marina. One day, probing into the Mauretanian forest, the brothers come upon the Flayer's Copse:

> Over the dark door on the gable-end a skull was nailed fast, showing its teeth and seeming to invite entry with its grin. Like a jewel in its chain, it was the central link of a narrow gable frieze which appeared to be formed of brown spiders. Suddenly we guessed that it was fashioned of human hands fastened to the wall. So clearly did we see this that we picked out the little peg driven through the palm of each one. On the trees, too, which ringed the clearing bleached the death's-heads.... At the same time there bore down upon the wind a clinging heavy and sweet smell of corruption which made us shiver to the marrow of our bones. Within us we felt the melody of life touch its darkest and deepest chord.

When the *Oberförster* unleashes his attack, the narrator joins a troop of farmers and peasants to do desperate battle. The actual mêlée is fought mainly between Belovar's noble greyhounds and the giant mastiffs of the Mauretanians. Pursued by Chiffon Rouge, the Ranger's favourite killer-bloodhound, the narrator flees down the cliffs to the hermitage. Summoned by Erio, the vipers interpose a barrier of flame and venom between the brothers and the murdering pack. The realm of the Marina goes under in an apocalypse of fire, blood and crashing masonry. Otho and the narrator board a vessel, mysteriously ready for them, and escape to a far shore. There, in the mountain fastness of Alta Plana, the halls of Ansgar bide their festive coming.

Admirers of Ernst Jünger, apologists for the right-wing élitism and nationalist mystique he advocated in the 1920s and '30s, have hailed *Auf den Marmorklippen* as anti-Nazi. It has been widely asserted that this arcane fable is the only major act of resistance, of inner sabotage, carried on by German literature under Hitler. Jünger himself has been more circumspect, and rightly so. The depiction of the Head Ranger and his Mauretanian gangs is obviously directed against Nazism. The very name "Chiffon Rouge" evokes the blood-red banners which went before the marching SS. Jünger's narrative of the processes of menace and subterranean blackmail whereby the forest horde insinuates itself into the daily lives and even dreams of Marina and the Campagna, is a first-class piece of political observation and satire. His account of the visit to the hermitage of Braquemart and the young Prince of Sunmyra is both acute and prophetic. In this scene probably the subtlest in the book, the impotence of traditional elements in German society, the surrender to opportunism or elegant despair of those forces that might have challenged Hitler, are deeply etched. But no scheme of straightforward political allegory or subversion fits. Even the bestial image of the Flayer's Copse is less trenchant or unambiguous than might appear. The analogy with the concentration camps about which Jünger had heard and intimated a good deal as early as 1939, but against which he never raised a public cry, is evident and graphic. But the dwarf who plies his butcher's craft in the clearing of Köppels-Bleek belongs less to the macabre repertoire of National Socialism than he does to the world of Wagner's Mime or to the malignant trolls of Scandinavian saga. And how betrayingly bathetic, how devoid of genuine fury is the reference to the "melody of life" with which the passage closes. Belovar can be equated with no recognisable contemporary political stance. His roistering homestead, his patriarchal fierceness, suggest a version of pastoral as Teutonic, as deep-rooted in the ideal of *Blut und Boden* as were the Nordic fantasies of Rosenberg.

What is one to make of the end of the fable? For all its manifest terror the destruction of the Marina elicits from Otho and the narrator a highly ambivalent response. The spectacle of ruin seems to them filled with a strange beauty and somehow justified or, at least, sanctified by doom. (Meditating on the plot against Hitler in July 1944, which he had refused to join, Jünger wondered whether a nation ought, by mere accident and artifice of individual deeds, to escape its tragic destiny.) Though fleeing for their lives, the elect brethren acquiesce, at a disturbingly central level, in the barbaric triumph of the Mauretanians:

> No house is built, no plan laid, of which decay is not the corner-stone, and what lives eternally in us does not lie in our works. This we perceived in the flames, and yet there was joy in their radiance.... Our hearts felt that the fires in the sky had begun to lose something of their balefulness; they were mingled with the red of dawn.

For the lordly few there is sanctuary in Alta Plana. How, except by gross simplification, can one read this Nietzschean, hieratic close as an attack on Hitlerism, let alone a call to active resistance? Though he writes from an obvious propagandistic bias, Helmut Kaiser, one of Jünger's East German critics, is scarcely wrong when he characterises the "message" of *On the*

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Marble Cliffs as one of haughty, almost vindictive despair. The existence of the Marina is doomed not only because the evil powers of the forest are so great and ruthless. The humanistic values of life in the vineyards and comely cities are not worth preserving. They are sapped by bourgeois decay. Let Heraclitean fire purge all.

The true consistency of Jünger's parable is personal. The vipers that guard the narrator are immediately cognate to the Orphic and literal snakes (group *Ophidia*, order *Squamata*) which obsess Jünger's fantasies and with which his meticulously recorded dreams are replete. Brother Otho stands for Friedrich Georg Jünger, himself a poet and naturalist. Father Lampros has his recognisable model in the Jünger circle. Above all, the portrait of the narrator is insistently autobiographical. He has Jünger's port and style of vision. He too dwells among serpents, flowers and ancient, stately things. He too is a soldier who makes of battle a *rite de passage* into the hidden places of the spirit. His inward home is the *Burgunderland*, a partly historical, partly emblematic amalgam of French and German latinity which fascinates Jünger as it did Stefan George and Ernst Robert Curtius. At the nadir of the Reich, Jünger still joined other Knights of the Order of *Pour le mérite* in commemorative ceremonies in Berlin. Similarly, the warrior-dreamers of the *Marmorklippen* intimate the survival, beyond all present disaster, of an occult chivalry. At many points, it is difficult to distinguish between allegory and personal memoir. In July 1943, for example, Jünger's diary alludes to a "mysterious" visit from von Trott, a visit which presumably took place in 1938 or 1939 and had some relation to clandestine action against Hitler; in the dialogue with Braquemart and the young Prince, that visit is already recorded.

ERNST JÜNGER'S FAIRY-TALE is as cold and inert as its haunting title. Though composed of the short sentences which are characteristic of his manner, it achieves the laboured solemnity of a slow-motion film. No shaft of humour dents its burnished panoply. The tale is brimful of pain and violence. Yet they are seen in a distancing light. The battle of the great hounds is one of the cruellest set pieces in modern fantasy. The narrator himself compares the scene with the pit of hell. Nevertheless, the dominant note is one of unreality, of ceremonious stillness. It is as if all the maddened, wildly moving shapes were transfixed in the heavy cadence of a dream. Where have

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we seen that murderous chase before, that ornate blaze of spears and torches in a night-forest? In the paintings of Uccello. Uccello is an arresting painter; but he is also a minor master, or one whose brilliant work is marginal to the main energies of renaissance art. Eroded by sentimentality and middle-class taste, his hard enamelling, his static violence, re-appear in the Pre-Raphaelites. Jünger's eye is strikingly akin to that of Millais and Rossetti. Both aesthetics register the same minute details of flora and fauna, the same tints of precious stones and woven silk. Jünger's journals record a mania for curiosa, for 18th-century erotica, for the florid and gilt *bric-à-brac* of European and oriental mundanity. He shares with painters and poets of the *fin-de-siècle* an amateurish interest in sadism. On the Paris quais, Captain Jünger pores over dusty chronicles of chastisement and execution. Cannibalism haunts his imagination and he notes, with a curator's precision, what evidence there is of its re-emergence on the Russian front and in the starving prison camps.

The inspirers of Jünger's sensibility are French rather than German. It is the post-symbolist and decadent movements in French literature he draws on most directly: Huysmans, Léon Bloy, Octave Mirbeau, whose *Jardin des supplices* conjoins in its very title two of Jünger's abiding interests. In its terrible detachment, Jünger's *Strahlungen*, the record of his years in occupied Paris and of his conducted tour on the Caucasian front, is reminiscent of some of the Goncourt journals, particularly for 1870–71. In both cases the ultimate strategy is one of experience made static by elegance. Whether he is noting the purchase of a rare engraving or the massacre of Jews, Jünger maintains a fastidious, quietly observant discipline of feeling. Watching a raid on the Renault works in March 1942, the chevalier of the marble cliffs comments that several hundred are reported slain and over a thousand gravely hurt: "but seen from my quarter, the affair looked rather like stage-lighting in a shadow-theatre." This is the focus of the dandy. I mean the word in its strong, condottiero form, as comprehending asceticism and cool courage. The dandy confronts the sum of life but keeps it at gauntlet's length. Like his counterparts in the dramas of Montherlant, there is one temptation only which Jünger finds it really difficult to resist: *die Versuchung zur Menschenverachtung*, the temptation to despise human beings. Now I suspect that this attitude is more current among highly cultured men than is advertised. But Jünger makes a virtue of what is, essentially, a grave defect of consciousness, an atrophy at the vital centre.

A "TWENTIETH-CENTURY CLASSIC"? Perhaps so. But in an almost mathematical sense. *On the Marble Cliffs* is a theorem of limitation. It enacts the precise incommensurability between a certain cast of abstract humanism or high civilisation and the realities of modern terror. In its ritual tranquillity, in its candid suggestion that flight into archaic utopia (the domain of privacy, of aesthetic and antiquarian cultivation) is the only way out, Jünger's legend embodies a tragic failure of nerve. Otho and his brother are custodians of ruin, as they are herbalists. Their powers of effective response are withered at the root. Jünger professes to have spent a lifetime in combat against nihilism; the spectre of nihilism haunts his post-war rhetoric. Yet there is in his own outlook—physically and psychologically implicated in the violent fabric of history as his personal career has doubtless been—a profound nihilism. Reading his work, one experiences what Emily Dickinson termed "a zero at the bone."

The incapacity to feel lest feeling grow corrupt and banal is perhaps the paralysing dilemma of a classic, necessarily élitist culture. *Auf den Marmorklippen* has importance as a statement of this dilemma. The nocturnal word which Jünger himself applies to this condition is *tristia*. Through it blow the coldest winds from Limbo. Robbed of his only child, seeing Germany collapse into hideous abjection, Ernst Jünger attends a final, absurd meeting of local Nazi officials. He watches Hitler's thugs scheming their last act of murder or getting ready to scurry for cover. Yet no cry, no leap of rage escapes him. He notes in his diary: "I lack the capacity for hatred." There have been too many moments in our savage time when such absence of hatred is the same as the absence of love.

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The Unexplained Revolution

Was it "Court" v. "Country"? — By G. R. Elton

Among the unsolved puzzles of English history, the Civil Wars of the 17th century stand high. There we have, on the face of it, a series of enormous events—war in England among Englishmen, a king publicly beheaded, twenty years of violent upheaval. Something, surely, was very badly wrong with the body politic, or so it would appear. Revolutionary situations and civil wars do not happen without good cause, and the good causes of those events have been passionately hunted ever since. But the hunt turns up more mythical unicorns than usefully edible prey. Did the factions divide over the true nature of the constitution: was it a conflict between royal absolutists and parliamentary constitutionalists? This is a supposition hallowed by tradition: but it has been shown that the leaders and spokesmen of all shades of opinion really held fundamentally identical views.[1] Was it a war for puritanism, for liberty of conscience against a repressive anglican uniformity? Such issues grew prominent as the war advanced, but revolutionary puritanism is rarely found before 1640, and in the early years of the Long Parliament the one thing that prevented Pym's party from breaking up was his careful avoidance of the religious issue.[2] Or was it, as all major revolutions are supposed to be, the outcome of a deep-rooted social split, between classes or within the governing class? The volumes which have been written around that supposition do not need listing here; yet in the end, neither the old Marxist view (bourgeois Parliament *v.* feudal king), nor a neo-Marxist view (the revolt of the "industrious sort"), nor an anti-Marxist social classification of falling and rising gentries have supplied the answer because in every case the facts stand awkwardly to the theory. At present it looks as though only two kinds of historians can be satisfied that they know why the Civil War happened: those content with their ideologies, whatever the facts may say, and those content to believe that the wickedness of this man or that will serve for an explanation.

It is into this situation that Professor Zagorin has stepped forth with yet another attempt to tell why those dire events occurred.[3] His approach is not entirely original, but he employs it more consistently and fruitfully than anyone since Clarendon. In short, he sees the years leading to war as marked by the growth of two groups identifiable in and out of Parliament—one clustered round the king and his Court, the other clustered round a parliamentary leadership and characterised in the main by a comprehensive dislike of all things connected with the Court. The second (the Country) he regards as the bearer of revolution, or at least as the essential instrument for preparing the ground for revolution by destroying the power of the first. He rightly dismisses the various determinist interpretations and can find no applicable social categories into which to divide supporters and opponents of the Court: both groups were composed of men of the same stamp, standing, convictions and attitudes. Even religion does not define them, though extreme high-Church men leaned always to the Court and extreme puritans to the Country. Using these categories, he investigates the structure of parliamentary and, in the end, also extra-parliamentary conflict, and though perhaps he does not get very far in uncovering the grass roots of either sector he scores some excellent points. He is especially good on the disastrous effects of Buckingham's régime which "sowed disaffection in the Court and was the prime cause of enmity on the political scene" (p. 59). He handles the tricky question of puritanism with becoming care and wisely avoids identifying it with sectarianism.[4] His treatment of Pym's party—its triumph and decline in the

[1] Margaret A. Judson, *The Crisis of the Constitution* (1949); R. W. K. Hinton, "Government and Liberty under James I," *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. 11 (1957), pp. 48–64.

[2] Recent analyses of puritanism have made it ever more difficult to know what the thing was, but they agree in showing that mainline puritanism was non-revolutionary, that until 1626 it looked like winning anyway, and that if there was a revolution it was not puritan. *E.g.*, C. H. George, "Puritanism as History and Historiography," *Past & Present*, vol. 41 (1968), pp. 77–104.

[3] Perez Zagorin, *The Court and the Country: the Beginning of the English Revolution*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £3; and Atheneum, New York, $10.

[4] But he grossly exaggerates when he speaks (p. 157) of puritanism "tenaciously" preserving its identity for seventy years. Historians' lives would be easier if this were remotely true.

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first two sessions of the Long Parliament—is highly illuminating, a long overdue descriptive analysis which will do nothing but good. His refusal to be tied by theory, and his attempt to deal through real people, are both admirable. He has unquestionably made an important contribution to the debate which should be heeded by all. But if precedent is anything to go by, this account is likely to be swallowed rather than criticised, as all the explanations of the revolution have been when first they appeared. Therefore: is he right?

DESPITE his rejection of theory, Zagorin depends in the last resort on his schematic categories which he treats as real and solid. There is not much question about the Court: it existed. Zagorin defines it as the "throng of ministers, courtiers, officials, and servants" which clustered round the king and, at the centre as well as in the localities, governed for him. He excludes the unpaid local officials, such as sheriffs and justices of the peace, a distinction just worthy of acceptance. Altogether, this is an adequate first definition, but for the purposes served here it needs a great deal of refining. A fuller understanding of administrative history and its problems might have led to some distinctions in all this welter. A secretary of state and a feodary of the Court of Wards may both be called members of the Court, but they are so in very different ways. Working stiffs and sinecurists, administrators and household officers and lawyers, cannot really be so readily thrown into one great bag and never be distinguished again. Differences of employment, security, and standing affect political attitudes and actions, the one thing that matters here; and so do personal preferences. And even if the crude definition were enough, it says nothing about party: many men with Court office found themselves at times in opposition to Court policy. There is no need to go into detail; the case of John Pym will suffice to call the category in question. We are told that he must not "be classified as an official," even though he held a receivership of revenue for close on thirty years and that very office is explicitly included among those which "the Court swept out to include" in the localities. Clearly, the definition may be too simple—especially as failure to hold office may, as we shall see, be read quite another way. And lastly, Zagorin's use of Court as equal to the king's political party hides a fundamental fact of the history of the time: the fact that a great deal of the political conflict occurred among the Court factions. Throughout, the members of the governing clique were usually more troubled by one

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another than by any regular opposition from the alleged "Country."[5]

The difficulties caused by the notion of the Court are child's play compared with the doubts that must hang about any attempt to classify the Country. The author is, in fact, aware how thin the ice is that he skates on. Again and again, he is careful to stress that the Country is not really a party, a coherent body of men pursuing consistent political ends. But in fact he does regularly treat it as just such an entity, an agent of positive action "doing" this or that, nor is it easy to see that if he had heeded his warning he would have been able to do anything at all with a thing that becomes manageable only when its elusive reality is overlooked. His definition begs all the questions:

> The Country was the first opposition movement in English history whose character transcended that of a feudal following or faction.

But was "the Country" really an "opposition," and was it a movement at all? He has not shown it to be any of these things, and has indeed pointed out that it was really an exculpatory concept in the mind. The term, as he demonstrates, was used from the 1620s onwards to signify in general a position of doubt in the face of the government, and it is true that the dominant group of 1640 embodied a coalescence, under a leadership, of oppositionist particles that can be traced variously through the previous twenty years. But as against this, Zagorin has not succeeded in showing that the party of his dreams—the identifiable body of men promoting opposition to an equally solid Court group—ever existed at all. The jump from a discussion of the term to the description of a party in action is only, one fears, a jump. What Zagorin has proved (and this is important enough) is that the term was currently employed by those who wished to claim the respectability of a patriotic interest for their often very diverse resistance to the king's doings. To go beyond this is to fall back into the morass of "Whig" history, a point brought out when he slips casually into identifying this partified Country with Parliament itself (p. 90)—the Parliament which, of course, supplies his evidence for a struggle between two parties.

That the notion of a consistent "Country" opposition will not do is well illustrated by the action of its alleged leaders. Some of them may

[5] Zagorin makes no reference to the outstanding recent treatment of Jacobean politics, Menna Prestwich's *Cranfield* (1966). Patrick Collinson's important study of *Elizabethan Puritanism* (1967) is said to have come out too late for use (p. 160, n. 2). In a book which itself reached the public eye towards the end of 1969 these are surprising omissions.

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well be thought of as "Country" by any definition, especially (and significantly) the puritan peers like Saye or Bedford. But the men who opposed the Court in the Commons do not fit so well. We have already noted the puzzle posed by Pym. Was Coke, that old official, "Country" —he who switched to opposition in Parliament only half-way through the 1621 session when the coveted treasurership went to Cranfield? Was Wentworth, promoter of the Petition of Right, who came to terms with Buckingham and took long-sought office as soon as the 1628 Parliament rose? Noy, the notorious attorney-general of the 1630s, had been another leading supporter of the Petition. Even Eliot, most passionate of "opposers," held local office, was a Buckingham client, and was rightly thought to be working for advancement. I am not suggesting that these men and others like them, did not often oppose Court politics or advocate moves to counter the king's line of action, but nothing in their behaviour was as consistently and fundamentally "oppositionist" as the scheme of Zagorin's book demands (and gets). Their position has been subtly misinterpreted: what moved them was not adherence to a Country opposition to the Court, but a sincere and proper desire to improve the Court by joining it; as so many of them proved at the first opportunity, from Wentworth's misunderstood "apostacy" to the wholesale elevation to office which accompanied the calling of the Long Parliament. They rightly believed that political life involved the exercise of power, and they believed with equal justice that they would manage the power of office better than the creatures the king delighted to honour. If they were "Country," this was only because for one reason and another the "Court" was closed to them; but this sort of "Country" is no use to Zagorin's purpose of discovering "the beginning of the English Revolution." Court and Country are useful concepts in defining certain attitudes and occasional positions, as well as offering political poles for ambition and opinion to gather round. But they were not movements or parties, not entities by means of which the political battles were fought. The Country, as it appears in Zagorin's book, did not exist at all, and his Court oversimplifies the realities. What we are really faced with is politics—the rivalries and differences among the monopolisers of power and those seeking to break into the monopoly (neither a group without its own internal and intense differences)—and nothing so far enables us to say that in these political realities the future revolution was being prepared.

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THUS, THIS ATTEMPT to explain the situation of 1640–1642 by means of a comprehensive generalisation fails, like its predecessors. Since Court and Country are proper terms to use, though not necessarily quite in the sense used here, Zagorin's account is superior to those which use the improper categories of class or of precise religious parties. But it remains true that the struggle of Court and Country led really not to what actually happened—the overwhelming of the king's government, rebellion, civil war—but to the sort of political mêlée which is commonplace in any live political system. If we are to break out of this impasse, we must attend to two ingredients in this particular story which Zagorin's preoccupation with his parties has caused him to ignore too much: the existence of "real" issues transcending the struggle for power, and the changes brought by time. Revolutionary inklings occur among the fringe elements of the Country and in some speeches and sermons, as Michael Walzer has sufficiently proved; though these were far from prominent before the war, they should have been mentioned here because they may help to explain how solid gentlemen could move from exasperation to rebellion.

More important, if the nature of opposition is to be properly grasped, the dark spectre of Protestantism's fate in Europe needs to be con-

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stantly kept in mind—but I do not remember it being mentioned at all. The Palatinate does not make the index, and the one mention of the Thirty Years' War (p. 4) fails to see the point which is not that revolution in England should be explained by the direct effects of the war. In fact, the English situation alone explains nothing: let us not forget the tears of Germany.[6] And lastly, the one thing strikingly missing here is a full account of the Eleven Years' Tyranny. The "Country" which stood forth in 1640 was the product of the 1630s; the book obscures the quite fundamental differences between the age of Buckingham and the age of Laud. Like so much else lately written on this period, even this work, which includes some excellent narrative and much splendid reality, still suffers from attending too much on social analysis and too little on history.

If we are ever to get further with what is after all an important problem, we need (it seems to me) to start again. We need to reconsider our preconceived notions about this age of upheaval and especially to ask ourselves whether a situation in which highly intelligent and ingenious answers, offered by historians of manifest worth, so regularly fail to satisfy does not arise from the causes usual in such cases: namely, that the question is wrongly put. It seems to me that the usual posing of the question contains at least two misleading essentials.

In the first place, we still have no history of these times which remembers that no one knew of the ultimate outcome. The whole search for "the beginning of the English Revolution" in the previous forty years' history rests on the supposition that 1640 was implicit in 1628 and 1621—and further back still. But was it? So far, at least, we do not seem to do very well on the assumption that it was. We need now to understand these events—these disputes and crises—in their own right, because only in that way shall we succeed in discovering how and why the normal, if agitated, life of affairs, with its successes and failures, its satisfactions and exasperations, came in the end to a point where normal gave way to exceptional and unpredictable. I do not call for a shutting of eyes to the ultimate crisis, but for an investigation which is not blindly fixated on that last explosion.

And secondly, a more radical suggestion still may be made. Have we perhaps, in a way, misconceived the exceptional character of the events to be explained? We take it for granted that the rebellion and Civil War prove things to have been drastically amiss. But was this so? Was political conflict even of a drastic kind so unusual? Was war among Englishmen—and we might remember that it would have been a very different war if Scotsmen and Irishmen had not also been involved—so totally out of the reckoning?

THERE ARE QUESTIONS, but so far there are no answers. I do not doubt that the Civil War was a national disaster, or that people were in measure surprised by it. But the common view makes it a monstrosity in creation, and it does so because we labour under another conventional notion, that of the Tudor peace. One hundred and fifty years before Edgehill, rival armies were moving about the English countryside—and they were far from new then. Since those days, several major and many minor risings had occurred; real war had on occasion been barely averted. No Tudor ever made the mistake of supposing that physical violence between factions of Englishmen had ended for ever. The country carried arms and was trained to them. Certainly no one in 1640 wanted civil war, and not many positively hoped for it even in 1642. That in fact it came is something that needs explaining from the sequence of events and the clash of men in affairs. But it seems to me that the resort to arms and the lapse into revolution were easier for that generation than historians since that day, aware of what the war was to be like and how futile its outcome, have been willing to recognise.

[6] *Lacrimae Germaniae*, a German sermon of 1638 which was at once translated as a shot in the campaign against England's failure to intervene in the war.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

Malcolm Lowry, New York Publishing, & the "New Illiteracy"

By Matthew Corrigan

> *"... even the forms that madness takes, let alone the way in which madness is evaluated, are controlled by the culture in which it occurs."*—LIONEL TRILLING in *Beyond Culture*

IT IS IRONY of the kind Malcolm Lowry himself would have appreciated that a decade after his death a New York publishing house should be releasing a novel by him which is in effect the novel his publishers plagued him to deliver, to their expectations, the last eight years of his life. But he could not and would not deliver it then, and in a way he has got even with them by refusing to deliver it now.

When Lowry died in 1957 he had no book in print in English. Had he wanted to purchase a copy of his masterpiece *Under the Volcano* he would have had to settle for a German or French translation. Since his death there have appeared three American editions of that novel, by three different publishers. Among the manuscripts left behind by Lowry when he died were the drafts of three-and-a-half novels, hundreds of poems, at least half a dozen short stories, essays, playscripts and journals amounting to several hundred pages. At least two of the unfinished novels have deserved fair publication before now: *October Ferry to Gabriola* (waiting to be edited before publication) and the heavily edited, recently published, *Dark As the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid*.[1]

Despite whatever personal enthusiasm accompanied the appearance of the *Grave* manuscript in the summer of 1968, its publication in this manipulated version comes to represent a perfect testament to the intellectual and moral blindness of the New York publishing world. While Lowry was alive, struggling, and writing this novel, at least two publishers disowned him (*i.e.*, wrote him off) because his talent did not seem likely to subscribe to their expectations of the novel *genre* either in subject-matter or form; and now, in death, publishers (albeit different ones) still unconsciously want that novel from him. In his introduction to this edition Professor Douglas Day tells us there were 705 pages of typescript, "already yellowing and crumbling," which he decided amounted to "a novel." The publishers agreed—and Professor Day set to work with Mrs. Lowry to "splice" and "cut" the manuscript to about one-half. It is not clear from Professor Day's remarks whose idea it was to edit the manuscript in this way. We have been led to believe the edition is a compromise of interests and purposes. In the introduction he lists the choices open to an editor confronting the Lowry manuscript, and seems himself to have preferred an edition closer to Edmund Wilson's version of Fitzgerald's *Last Tycoon*; that is, an edition which retained some of the flavour of the rough draft, including the notes Lowry made to himself at the different stages of his working on the novel, none of which are provided in this chaste edition. He does not say finally why this was not done, nor do the publishers—and the book was placed on the market, at least in America, as the "new Lowry novel."

Now I AM FULLY aware and appreciative of the fact that Mrs. Lowry wants to be careful with every word of her husband's released at this time, a worry that allows her to believe she can continue to rewrite him. During Lowry's lifetime she worked closely with her husband, and he often told people she knew as much about his writing as he did. I am sure she did, and still does. But when an author dies something happens to his work. It may become more important for his future reputation that the unfinished work remain so, rather than be brought to some kind of tentative and artificial conclusion. I doubt seriously if anyone, even the author's *alter ego*, even his muse, has the right to tamper in any way with what has been left uncompleted. What can be gained in the long run by doing so?

This edition of Lowry's unfinished manuscript, while it gives those of us who admire him as a writer, and who are troubled by the problem of his failure, something to work with, and to enjoy vicariously, is nevertheless an edition which will have to be redone some time in the future. This is a fact of literary history too large to argue here. Nor do I want here to impugn Mrs. Lowry's claim that she must edit and if necessary rewrite her husband's rough drafts. In her own way she is right, and must receive a justice different from that

[1] *Dark As the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid*. BY MALCOLM LOWRY. Edited by Douglas Day and Margerie Lowry. New York (New American Library, $5.95), 1968; London (Jonathan Cape, 35s.), 1969.

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deserved by you or me, or by a publisher, were we to attempt the same thing. As it stands, however, *Dark As the Grave* is neither Lowry's novel nor his manuscript, and the publishers are to be held culpable at some future date for having beneficently overseen the production of such a pastiche. Lowry is not Thomas Wolfe; he cannot be edited with scissors and pastepot, which is what was finally done with this manuscript after the initial disagreement among the parties concerned over how it should be treated. The publishers—who ordinarily exercise such strong control over their product—for once in their lives (and for the right reasons) ought to have insisted on publishing the text and notes as they stood, making some allowance typographically—not editorially—for the non-specialist reader.

I have been told their hands were tied, that they claim in this instance a purity of motive. I am not convinced, however, that had they had complete freedom with this manuscript, the end result would have been much different. I can think of no exceptions in American publishing to what I am suggesting here. What a publisher's editor says he wants and what his firm allows are the standard definitions of optimism and defeat in this business. American publishers generally lack imagination when it comes to such challenges. They are usually insecure on questions of artistic values, as they are on intellectual and moral ones. Their treatment of Lowry while he was alive stands as adequate evidence of this.

IN THE PAST, American publishers have tried too ardently to make an author's unfinished manuscript conform to a finished format. The ghost of Maxwell Perkins—whose contribution to American literature will have to be drastically re-examined one day—looms large over the industry and has given it a rather spurious self-confidence. The idea that a man's unfinished work is not respectable unless it can somehow be stuffed into the mould of the novel, and advertised accordingly, is typically American. The editors' concern for Lowry's repetition within the manuscript (*e.g.*, a particular incident appearing "in as many as five different versions, none immediately obvious as superior in quality to the others") is but one indication of brain-washing in this regard. As critics today we have too many presuppositions, too many ideas *about* literature. So what if there are repetitions? So what if Lowry lost interest in the novel form (the real point which everyone misses), that glass-house hybrid that never did get justified, and whose assumptions of form its greatest practitioners have torn asunder? The notebooks of many great writers are interesting for this fact alone: that they show us the mind of the author trying to extricate itself, descriptively, from the same labyrinth. Often the very patterns of such repetition carry the final message. Joyce's *Portrait* is full of repetitions (whole sentences, some of them needless if we look too closely at the text), as it is also of assumptions which Joyce thinks he has made legitimately within the context of *Portrait* but which in fact are based on incidents and epiphanies found only in *Stephen Hero*. What right would anyone have to edit these?—though of course they could be expunged and a reader not know the difference.

Serious writing about self-consciousness always risks repetitiveness. It would be different if this Lowry manuscript could be turned into a "respectable" novel, one that stands on its own two feet. But it can't, any more than Lowry could be turned into a best selling novelist in his own day. The manuscript depends for its aesthetic existence on Lowry's other works, particularly on *Under the Volcano*, but also on his letters; in fact it concerns the man who has written *Volcano*, and the second thoughts he has on revisiting the actual and psychic locus of that novel. With this in mind, it would seem feasible to publish the *Grave* manuscript simply as a journal—dropping the label "novel" altogether, which is misleading, and which sets up expectations in everyone's unconscious, the editors' included. The world does not need a new novel by anybody, and we do not need to be fed the myth that Lowry left behind a "couple of nearly finished novels" which some magnanimous publisher is now going to issue; it is an injustice of an aesthetic and moral nature to do so.

Besides, let's face it, Malcolm Lowry is not for public consumption. To pretend in any way that he may still win a popular reputation is to extend further the mythology that has pervaded the world of New York publishing—a world where such an unbelievably low percentage of what is produced annually proves of any lasting value (all things considered, a percentage lower than ever before, but also lower than in any analogous situation in Western culture) that one is forced to conclude not only that there is nothing left in that literary jungle working for literature, but that there may be indistinct forces working *against* it. In spite of the uniqueness of his vision and the appropriateness of his sense of terror Lowry's true importance is an elusive thing, to be approached with delicacy and a certain peace of mind. We may not in our time be able to determine this importance except in fits and starts—as was the case of the writers with whom Lowry is most closely affined: Blake, Poe, Melville, Kafka. The least we can

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do, though, is not make things more difficult for a future which may well see his terror, his excess, his vision, less pathologically than we can.

In a country like France the unfinished novel of so important a writer would have been published more or less as it stood, regardless of the challenge this presented to editor, typographer, or reader. (There is nothing in American publishing, for example, comparable to the 1957 French publication of Valéry's *Cahiers*, a sumptuous facsimile edition of his notebooks in 29 volumes.) In America there is thought to be something disgraceful about publishing a man's complete *oeuvres*, including the pieces that do not fit. By choosing the line of least intellectual resistance in all things America has reached the stage where she believes her own consumer myths. Plastic conformity has become the absolute of expediency, and everything from cereal to cities is pre-fabricated, pre-stressed, pre-chewed. There was a time when a serious author, even in America, kept journals, knowing full well that these too were part of his being as a writer and would play an important part after his death in allowing him to be understood, at least if what he had to say throughout his life was altogether valid. But American writers do not keep journals any longer. American publishers do not want to publish journals. Just as there is no market for unfinished novels, there is no market for journals. That we are told these things seems to be sufficient to believe them. Such unfinished material as is left behind by our writers is relegated to the hermetically-sealed depositories of our universities, where it lies dormant until an equally predictable piece of cultural charlatanism takes place —some assistant professor, with an eye to his future, convinces a junior editor in New York that with a little manual labour a "wholeness" might be arranged in such and such's work, so that it could be published. While this has happened the author has rotted away, a generation has passed possibly, and another dice throw has been realised by the fortunes of taste. What has also happened in the meantime, and this most significantly, is that the New York publishing world has had a change of blood—to explain partly, but never to justify, its seeming change of heart toward the dead author.

And indeed who is to say after a writer is dead that his letters, journals, unfinished manuscripts are not as important as his two or three novels? Renard's or Gide's or Pavese's journals mean to many what their finished creative works fail to mean. One could argue—as I believe Cyril Connolly once did—that Gide's *récits* are rallied together almost haphazardly and with a sometimes disappointing economy of spirit from the life-world inhabited so fully by the volumes of journals. Lowry's growth as a writer would now seem to reveal a gradual stripping off of the masks which fiction (and particularly the novel) has imposed. It is just possible he was on his way to discovering something new about literature and the possibilities of reconstruction left open to it after Joyce's rather extensive demolition-job. As he wrote in his letters: "Unquestionably what one is after is a new form, a new approach to reality itself. . . ." Such a task finally had to lie outside the novel form as we know it. It is not our concern, however, whether he succeeded in his design or not. It is enough to remark that he was one of the last major writers to believe in the visionary power of suffering and one of the last to try to write about it. As a result he found most contemporary writers, novelists especially, dishonest in what they had to say. As he put it in this manuscript:

> What liars writers are sometimes, and what feeble accounts they give of their despairs. His [own] agonies must be far from unique yet it seemed to him that if but one person had survived such a thing to breathe purer air and love the light that there was hope for the human race. For one man's agony belongs to all men and to God.

In an age lacking a sane understanding of its own powers Lowry tried to find a more honest and appropriate voice for literature. While he was living his publishers didn't understand these things, as they did not understand the writing habits that were fostered by such instincts, preferring to chalk up his recalcitrance and delay to alcohol.

It is true, of course, that Lowry was a dipsomaniac and a difficult person to deal with—yet when the whole story is told it will be evident, I believe, that he suffered in addition to his own personal demons, but not necessarily because of them, an indifference that can be listed among the subtle injustices which certain ages, in different ways, have perpetrated on their best artists. No one denies that he did not help matters; but history is full of great writers who would not know how to behave in a plush Park Avenue office—and the implications of this should disturb no one. He had the decency, at least, to keep to himself. Some authors thrive on insensitivity, their own included; others are destroyed by it. Lowry was bent on destroying himself anyway—his art was the only reprieve from suicide he accepted—so that all we want to pay attention to here is the degree to which publishers might have been re-

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sponsible for the aggravation not of his personal but of his artistic losses.

Reading through the manuscript of *Dark As the Grave* one is almost forced to argue that here was a fine creative mind ruined not by alcohol or by anything as confusedly explained as "the age" but ruined for reasons that had to do with itself in dialectic with what we can only call its primary objective world. This world for Lowry was one he never knew and seldom entered in understanding; its cruelty and indifference he accepted as he accepted the fire that raged through his shack and destroyed his manuscripts—never thinking he could fight back to any advantage. The world of New York publishing and those great judgment-day board meetings which threatened his survival as a writer were part of this world he did not understand. His escape to a hand-to-mouth existence in the backwash of British Columbia, becoming a self-enlisted outcast right out of Conrad, was an unconscious gesture against this misunderstanding. So was his growing involvement with nature; so were the letters he wrote to his New York agent and to publishers, painstaking letters which, as he was writing them, bridged for him, or so he thought, the carefully measured distance between himself and that concrete thermos (significantly, almost the furthest distance by straight line from New York he could manage in North America). The letters helped until he was left with the silence of expectation, awaiting a reply which seldom came in kind, a note suggesting he could survive as a writer cut off from society, that his instincts were right. Instead he received little encouragement and almost none of the kind he needed—the kind that would have nurtured the creator in him at all costs and not tried to find, where it no longer existed, the mere maker of novels. The world of New York publishing—which he confused foolishly with the audience every writer expects and has a right to, else he dies as a writer and becomes something else—and the mind of Malcolm Lowry were never bridged at all.

IT IS DIFFICULT not to see the publication of this Lowry book in the larger context of literature's plight in America. We know now from studies of the past that a literature reflects an age not merely in basic content and form but also in its psychic tendencies. Such tendencies are to their own age usually concealed or subliminal—but that they exist and actually inform the growth and stature of that literature can no longer be denied. The agonised posture of our economically crazed society has been more and more making itself evident in our literature. New York publishing exists on a purely mercantile level and serious writing on an increasingly academic one, and the best writers must wait it out most of their lives in small magazines (which now take up to eighteen months to publish a piece from the date of acceptance). They can, of course, do what many of them have felt forced to do, namely, sit down and write a best-seller. It is a mark of the sickness of our literacy that almost no serious American writer in the last few decades has not attempted to turn out such a "pot-boiler."

What is even more disheartening is the lack of enlightened experimentation that has come to be a part of the creative unconscious of the writer in the States, the lack of which has to do with the loss of language skills (and perhaps in the end meaningful literacy) so evident on all levels of our culture, political especially. If the writer in America becomes self-conscious and tries to experiment, his work enters the anathematised category of "serious writing" for which there is no longer even an assured opening in the small magazine. He has to publish the book himself or try to interest one of the small presses in it. (This is analogous to "off-Broadway" theatre, where one expects to find the best of what is being offered; or to "educational" television, which one needs a special device to receive, and which is almost the sole exhibitor of the kinds of worthwhile non-mythopoeic programming the basic networks in the U.K. provide.) After all these years of struggling to establish a democracy which reinforces an elementary freedom of speech, even a speech that is acceptably lyrical, we have not yet managed to centralise in our culture what is truly worthwhile and ennobling.

It is a simple fact that publishing in America has come to reflect the larger context of the plastic *Lebenswelt* we have forced upon our children—and against which some of them have responded with just revenge, by showing us how surrealistically they can make themselves at home in this world. The influences in publishing, of course, are more devious, more unconscious; the results, however, are easy to spot. To speak with New York publishers about this is to confuse them and what they believe in their hearts to resolve itself to "an honest day's work." The results begin with the startling fact, already suggested, that the big houses have nothing directly to do with literature: they do not know what it is, what it has been in the past; they do not seem to know what it can be today; and their predictions for the future could be handled by a literate fourth-year student in any of our better universities. They are completely at the mercy of the slag heap of manuscripts which builds at their feet and from

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which they feel compelled to select the year's quota of books. If a book of genuine merit is accepted, almost always publishers do not know how to handle it. Such books are often accepted at the price of one or two dismissals or resignations on the editorial staff. In many cases such books are then not published but "privated" by them. (The phrase is William Gaddis', and the history of the rejection and publication of his novel *The Recognitions* is a kind of horror story.) It is almost a universal practice in America to switch publishers after a writer has had some kind of notable success, suggesting not only that a forceful "agent" has entered the wings and has negotiated a better arrangement for the author elsewhere, but more unconsciously, suggesting the author's growing dissatisfaction with the first company for other than monetary reasons and his willingness to enact some kind of ritual revenge. It is also common practice to deal with yet another publisher for one's third or fourth book. The human relationship that one finds operating between author and publisher in other times and other cultures has been eradicated almost entirely; as a result so has any sense of there being one or two houses that stand above the others in consistency of quality (as Gallimard does in France).

In some cases the switch on the part of an author from one publisher to another has to do with a phenomenon which seems uniquely American, and which seems to have been inspired by the world of Big Business. I am referring to the migration of editors from one firm to another; editors who often use their list of authors—as professors in this country do their list of publications—to bargain for better jobs. (The Lowry account, for example, changed publishers twice because of an editor, and the manuscript of *Grave* went through the hands of no less than four publishers' editors in three years, all of whom left to work for other companies.) Much has been written over the last decade on this emergence in American publishing of the editor as key figure. An author tends to speak of his "editor" rather than his "publisher"; in many cases the editor has become the amanuensis for the author's inspiration—literally taking his creative insights in hand and helping him shape them. The original owners of a number of prestigious New York houses—remembering perhaps when things were a little different, when they and not their editors took Thomas Mann to lunch at the Algonquin—have publicly deplored this phenomenon. Inevitably the reasons for their displeasure tend to overlook the real structural causes for such editorial unrest. A number of critics have complained more honestly about the surreptitious effect of team-enterprise on writers and on literature. There is no question but that literature suffers in any struggle to uprear its head from an editorial bull-session. The point, of course, is not that an individual writer suffers (in fact the reputations of many second-rate writers are made this way), but that such a mass tampering with creative instinct affects literature unconsciously, and in ways not easy to talk about. American television, films, and merchandising generally, have recorded for posterity the effects of corporate intelligence upon creative intuition. The effect, simply, is that art does not grow under such bell-jar conditions.

In the case of some of the better younger writers we see the effects of all this most seriously. They begin their careers individually enough, but after the second book there is a formal sameness which makes their novels indistinguishable; they become mere tailors of neat 250-page novels. Look, for example, at Frederick Buechner, John Hawkes, Thomas Pynchon, Charles Haldeman, or the late Edward Wallant: these writers have not developed as their individual talent gave promise. One can sense in their later books something of the exhaustive struggle of getting that first book accepted; or, what is more frightening, one can sense the presence of an editor looking over the writer's shoulder. Something equivalent to their innocence as writers has been lost. In few other authors is the ulterior presence of the New York publishing world more noticeable than in Malcolm Lowry. In a very real sense *Dark As the Grave* becomes a book symbolic of the frustrations of the modern author: his failure to be understood, to have his work accepted, his too easy access to self-doubt, his struggle to shape his despair so that it comes out in twelve neat chapters, "a novel." It is much more than this, of course, but the manuscript is definitely scarred by the author's anxieties *qua* author, many of which his readers could have done without.

Let me give some examples. In one of Lowry's letters to his New York publisher he tries to justify the fact that he is working on a novel about a writer. Instinctively the reaction is negative. Without reading the result of his labours (*Dark As the Grave*, in fact) the publisher reminds him there is no market for books about writers. Lowry disagrees and cites Chekhov and Pirandello. Besides, he is obsessed with the subject. Now this incident has made its way into *Dark As the Grave*. Early in the manuscript Lowry take time out to discuss why he thinks it should be possible to write about writing:

> Usually if the writer wanted to talk about his own struggles, he disguised them as those of a

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> sculptor, or a musician, or of any other character, as though he were ashamed of his profession. It was a pity. For to learn something of the mechanics of his kind of creation, was not that to learn something of the mechanism of destiny? There was even a sort of unwritten law about it. Indeed it was the first thing you learned: the reader does not want to hear about your rejected play. That was true: still, why not? Half the world was like a writer who has had his play rejected. In fact the world at times seemed very like a rejected play itself. Or a rejected novel, like for instance, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, by Sigbjørn Wilderness [*i.e., Under the Volcano*, by Malcolm Lowry].

If we continue on in the manuscript and in Lowry's letters we realise that the argument is aimed not only at the reader. In effect Lowry is trying to justify to himself the reasons for his self-absorption as a writer, now that the prerogative of self-consciousness has been stripped from the modern will. The book essentially is about the artist analysing his instinct to create, an instinct that seems to him at odds with life as it was then being lived, with survival. It is just after World War II; he has completed the fourth and final version of *Under the Volcano* and sent the novel to his New York agent once again. *Grave* begins with Lowry and his wife travelling to Mexico from their home in Canada. His intentions are compounded. He wants partly to revisit the places and people he has written about in his novel, partly to "exorcise" some old feelings, partly to re-awaken others he may have forgotten about. The trip, as we might expect, is fraught with despair. A significant part of that despair, however, is the fear that the years spent coming to terms with his demented alcoholic past (in writing *Volcano*) may have been spent in vain, as the first reports from publishers on the revised version of the novel are again negative.

So much of the tension in this unfinished novel and in the later work is describable in terms of Lowry's running conflict with New York. I do not mean artistic tension—which is always justified in terms of the work itself. I mean plain anxiety. Lowry's fears group themselves around a common nucleus. In this novel he actually *lists* them. They are fears of rejection, of fire destroying his house and work (Lowry had lost the manuscript of a novel in a fire), of abusing his powers as a writer through alcohol and despair, of isolation from his age and its literature: fears of eviction, both spiritual and physical. His frustration with publishers can be seen as central to these fears. For some reason he was unable not to be affected by their judgment on his work. The third version of *Volcano* had been sent to his New York agent in 1940, and subsequently rejected by twelve publishers. He had worked on it for another four years (altogether he spent nine years on the novel) before sending it out again and undertaking this trip to Mexico. In *Dark As the Grave* we learn in detail of the effects on Lowry of its rejection once more. The implication of the new rejections is that the manuscript is too agonised, too complicated. Wilderness, Lowry, discusses with himself and with us the effects of this "cruel criticism":

> ... the usual bad news from America, this time something new in the language of rejection. The American editor, or reader, even pretended to have read it twice (which he might well have done without knowing it, Sigbjørn had said, since the same firm had rejected it before in a previous version as far back as 1940). "I do not give this opinion merely because I think it wouldn't sell.... My sense of its second-handedness deepened on rereading."... A sense of poignance, of loss, of absolute failure now came over Sigbjørn again.

A reader's report from Jonathan Cape, suggesting Lowry re-work *Volcano*, precipitates a suicide attempt, apparently real, as is almost everything else described in this novel. The extraordinary thing is how these incidents of rejection become almost *leitmotiv* throughout the manuscript.

> ... he was being invited to rewrite it. What! To rewrite it again? His mind travelled right back nine solid years of continual failure from New Year's Eve, 1945, to New Year's Eve, 1936, when he was here also, in Cuernavaca.... But then it [the novel] had been in a state, or nearly a state—yes, he could see by the letter—in a state they would have accepted it outright. For what they wanted to do, in effect, was for him to undo all the work he had done since then upon it, and put it back into its simplest, or at any rate its first form. But, he thought, here was temptation indeed, to give in.

Then Lowry draws a conclusion his admirers and his detractors already know, and which is implicit in all he has said thus far:

> ... it was failure and nothing else that had made his book more and more complicated and added all the different levels of meaning.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that Lowry let publishers affect him in this way. His great mistake was relying on their judgment. New York editors were simply not the best people to understand let alone nurture the kind of ideas that came to him in the desperate solitude of British Columbia. Yet he had nowhere else to turn. He was indeed isolated; he was not a member of an intellectual coterie; he had no academic friends. In fact he may not have needed that much outside commentary on his work, for he had (with

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his wife's help) an almost impeccable sense of its own rightness. But it may have helped offset the brusque criticism he was to receive from editors all his life; criticism, we tend to think, that did almost as much as alcohol to confound the development of his genius; and did so by questioning the instincts of that genius, sending it reeling aimlessly into doubt and self-analysis, the whorl of which was left on this work especially. This is not to suggest that in another age or under different conditions Lowry would have been a greater writer. That question is not possible now. It is to suggest that the shape of the work may contain, as part of its structural uniqueness, something of this unnatural imbalance of tensions. It is important that an artist develop *within* and *by means of* the state of tension that sets itself up necessarily between his own world and that of his age; between his intuition and its conception in the immediate environment. The old idea of an artist developing entirely on his own, outside his time, must be re-assessed. He outlives his time to be sure, and seems in retrospect to have forged its vanguard—but his being as a writer, and the body of work which is that state of being actualised, are themselves products of that state of tension. The writer must grow as an artist within his own time, not in some other, and certainly not only in his mind, though we can confuse the evidence of an author's life to think otherwise.

Eventually *Under the Volcano* found a New York editor who liked it and who was willing to fight the publishers for its acceptance; his name was Albert Erskine and he worked for Reynal & Hitchcock (now defunct). And Jonathan Cape changed his mind and decided to take a chance on the novel, after Lowry wrote him one of the longest justifications ever written about a work by an author to a publisher. In *Grave* Lowry bemoans the "appalling waste of time" spent on this letter, time he could have used more creatively.

Volcano, of course, was a critical success. When Lowry's editor moved to Random House he brought Lowry with him. In good faith Lowry was offered a contract the terms of which ("three books in two and a half years") it was never possible for him to meet, and he said so from the start. He worked on so many novels simultaneously that none got finished on time. Random House terminated the contract. It was not, however, only a question of needing more time. Nor was it simply a question of encouragement—which, in the years following *Volcano*'s publication, he received from Erskine. What he really needed was understanding, someone who knew how his mind worked, who realised exactly what kind of an artist he was, and who then, on the basis of that terrifying knowledge, knew how to deal with him. Undoubtedly Erskine could have supplied such understanding—even tried to do so; but his hands were tied. When they wrote to each other they often included, in addition to the official letter (for the files), a friendly note in which each spoke his mind. The situation became worse, their friendship became tense. During the final years, when Lowry needed understanding most, it was not forthcoming. Glib judgments were made on his work-in-progress by editors. He was told it would probably not be acceptable. In effect he received messages from New York suggesting if not what to write then how to do so. That he had earned no liberty in their eyes as a writer after the critical success of *Volcano* was the most difficult thing for him to understand.

Lowry's final letters to Erskine give us some idea of the effect of all this:

> ... did they think, by some legerdemain, this callous discouragement and schoolboy punishment technique was going to cause me to suddenly finish it overnight? [26 January 1954]

> ... it would seem better, all round, that so long as I continue on my own that the status of the work remain, so to say, my own, or more my own, stage secret. In other words, I don't think I want to send you any more bits and pieces ... I can't risk any further discouragement, not in the usual sense, and I don't mean this in a carping spirit, only that my self-critical faculty tends to be slightly manic-depressive, and to be frank, there are times when in process of creating I seem to need encouragement even if I think myself what I'm doing isn't entirely right, which certainly isn't fair to you; the second reason is that because of the peculiar way it seems I have to work, it's unfair to the work itself; for instance I honestly don't know at the moment whether I shall cut 200 pages out of *Gabriola*'s 500-odd and I won't know until it's finally (*sic*) typed. [22 May 1954]

And in the final letter to this editor (at least the last one printed in the *Selected Letters*), two years before his death, written from the neurosurgical ward of the Brook General Hospital in London, where he and his wife were recovering from breakdowns of one kind or another:

> Needless to say I feel badly not to have delivered the goods, some goods, long ere now, it was a great pity for me we had to sever the umbilical cord with Random House at the time we did: moreover I got very discouraged, not only by the reception but by the lack of a word from anyone in regard to what small things I did publish: both "The Bravest Boat" and "Strange Comfort" have become classics in French and Italian.... [July 1955]

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NOW ONE CAN ARGUE that the probable reason for the failure of so many talented novelists and for literature itself to develop in America beyond a certain stage lies outside the world of publishing, has to do with something deeper in the national psyche—and of course this would be true. But someone has to be responsible for the result, and it seems to me the writers themselves have suffered but not the publishers. What justification can there be for a New York publishing house which in one decade triples its assets yet at the end of that period is publishing less lasting literature (I am not talking of great literature) than in its first struggling years? Publishing, because of its failure to maintain itself as a promoter of culture, because of its failure to *understand* culture, has come not only to reflect our deepest cultural failings but actually to reinforce them. In the same way that so many of our national organisations have come to epitomise the failure of imagination and intellect to realise themselves, publishing has settled for documenting unconsciously that failure. It is helpful to remember that, as a profession, publishing once possessed a kind of intellectual integrity, an integrity which represented the university to the masses. Today, in America, against its own intentions, it lacks any kind of distinctive or believable voice; along with our best newspapers and magazines its voice has levelled off as a spokesman, a kind of urban half-wit, for what R. P. Blackmur called in the 1940s "the new illiteracy."

Perhaps 90 per cent of publishing today in America is the product of its own waste and the waste of our age. There was a time when literature, history, and philosophy existed by themselves on the one hand, found for themselves a publisher (if necessary were published by the author himself), then went on to find an audience. The system worked on a purely aristocratic basis: a kind of divine right of minds. The situation has changed. An ever more unenlightened democratic spirit has taken over here in the name of efficiency and profit. Literature, philosophy, history and the social sciences no longer exist primarily in the minds of the person writing on these subjects or of the person who may develop a taste for them but in the minds of the publishing world. I exaggerate, of course, but it is almost true, and it is as true of magazine as it is of book publishing. Almost all our leading magazines design the content of their issues beforehand, even their fiction. They know generally what they want and know where they can solicit it. They prefer to publish an established writer, whose name is as durable as certain soap products, rather than risk an "unknown." They do not ask Nabokov outright for his latest piece of 1930 sex but they know he'll come through anyway, and not upset the computed balance of their issue. Increasingly this has become the approach of book publishers as well. It is not simply a matter of anticipating or "tuning in" to taste. Nor is it a matter of creating taste intelligently. It is a much more invidious transaction. Taste is tampered with, its instincts strangulated, its possible range reduced to the most manageable proportions.

The process is visible in microcosm in the car and fashion industries. Changes are graduated so that (*a*) companies never outdo their creativity in one year and thus find themselves bankrupt of ideas the next; (b) the public finds the line of least resistance is still in buying "the new line." A famous fashion-designer in New York has recently remarked that he could stretch his imagination to its most baroque, come up with a ridiculous, impractical shoe for women, and that all he would have to do to make that shoe take over the market (and thus inform taste for the next few years) would be to compromise with common sense just a little: to bring the design of the shoe a degree or two back towards the "normal" shoe. The secret of controlling taste, then, is a kind of outrageous individuality coupled with a basic accepted design. It has nothing to do with genuine creative expression or self-discovery. It is a matter of altering just a little the basis of taste so that next year's fashions will go on to reflect our alterations, while being controlled by them. The results may be a permanent dissociation of taste from intelligence, creative and otherwise. As a result it is not outrageous to imagine American culture becoming—in that perfect image so much with us in this astronomical age —the product of its own waste.

IN AMERICA WE TOLERATE the illusion that television, Hollywood, publishing, give the public what it wants: that mass media are passive in nature. The same largess of error is at work here as in thinking private advertising fulfils a public need. Blake, I am sure, would have something to say about the way we confine ourselves to what we believe to be a requisite smallness of imagination. Examine, for example, the list of best-sellers in the *New York Times* any week of the year—and you find a list of "formula B" books which have nothing to do with the creative imagination that works its way through even the dullest culture, and which finally helps to define it. Here are books which have nothing to do with what we might call instinctive audience needs, expectations, or demands—but which owe their existence solely to the publishing industry itself, or more accur-

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ately, to the effects of that industry. (Even the number of pages, in some cases, is decided beforehand.) Publishing is now so committed to these books that they are its worst enemy, without its realising why. It literally cannot get away from them, any more than Detroit can get away from making a Detroit-like car. After a while the acceptance of the formula, like the acceptance of the cliché, becomes an unconscious thing; we cannot break the mould, we can only continue to fill it.

What seems to have happened is this. (And perhaps the seeds were contained in the institution from the start; Alexis de Tocqueville, we recall, noted that American democracy introduced a distinctive "trading spirit" into literature.) Not only does American publishing no longer represent, except accidentally, the most imaginative adventures of the human spirit; but it has become cemented in our economy as a permanent obstacle to that spirit proliferating. What I am suggesting, simply, is that publishing now exists as a positive shaping force in our culture. It is no longer just a medium through which man's efforts at maintaining a worthwhile culture pass without interference. Its structure of prejudice has changed the shape of almost everything that passes through it. There is no longer an individual creative spirit on "its other side" which it then locates and presents to a waiting public. It has developed—like so many of our institutions that were meant originally to *serve* in some way—too much of a mind of its own. In a similar fashion the press and television networks shape everything that passes through their machinery; and certain ideas just cannot get a hearing. It is almost symbolic of the breakdown I am suggesting (a breakdown of culture, language, learning) that the major publishing houses in America have now been sold to the larger communications media—to the newspaper and television empires, thinking innocently that they can avoid infiltration of the same kinds of mediocrity. In fact what such transfers mean is that publishing has sold out to the very monolithic, impersonal forces which it once considered its natural enemy.

Publishing in this country suffers from more than the absence of a conscience: it has become co-respondent in the divorce of literacy from taste. The extent of its own ethics does not rise above requesting an author not to send his manuscript to more than one house at a time. It does not matter that some houses keep a manuscript six months before arriving at a decision, and then, if it is negative, often get a secretary to word it. One has the feeling after dealing with some New York publishers that the elaborate veneer (the advertising, the plush offices) houses a kind of restless neurotic energy and almost no mind to focus it.

Sociologists who have turned their attention to modern American publishing have emphasised the changes which going on the stock market and amalgamation have brought about in the concept of publishing. Publishing is big business in America—which means it has to be as successful as possible to offset its tremendous expenses. Costs of publishing a book, we should realise, increase in some proportion to the size of the house concerned. Thus a large house publishing a first novel has to sell more copies to break even than a small one publishing the same book. Fiscal pressures often mean a firm is psychologically less free than it was in its youth, though of course this is not something that is registered on the company's books. In a business where company earnings must be reported quarterly to anxious stockholders (whose interest cannot remain literary) the prospect of slow or long-range projects is not very acceptable; the pressures put on editors, and indirectly, on writers, is thus immeasurable. Publishers, caught in their own business, have discovered that there are enough possible instant successes to enable them not to worry about finding the permanent work. Literature, as an ideal, is easily lost sight of; so is the humane, as a tactic for survival.

Publishing, as I have said, should provide a knowledgeable link between the innocent public and the world of creative and intellectual achievement. But in fact it works almost blindly, though always with the best intentions. In America, at least, it is so desperate not to do the wrong thing in making a decision on, say, a book about Ezra Pound, it sends the manuscript to one of the foremost critics of Pound for his advice. This particular professor —a man of exceptional critical instinct, who rather enjoys his role as undercover man for the world of Pound literature (along with the fee he gets)—has recently admitted receiving for approval almost every major manuscript on Pound submitted to publishers over the past five years. On the surface there is nothing wrong with this; but then, on the surface, there is little wrong with the behaviour of any large corporation. The professor whose advice the publishers (each unknown to the other) solicit is no longer a young man. His own work on Pound has been around long enough to be a classic, and to be out of print. As with anyone who has devoted his life to criticism, he has many enemies; undoubtedly there are people in the academic profession *he* does not like. Yet

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it is before his intelligence that almost every serious manuscript on Pound must now pass and receive some kind of ratification. If he does not like a manuscript he can so weaken the editors' confidence in it that they hesitate—and in hesitation (a principle in publishing) there lies always the final truth. The chance is not taken and the manuscript is rejected. Now the professor is a brilliant man and we assume a just one. But it is conceivable that an important new book on Pound might find its very existence in displacing his. The purpose and outlook of criticism change with each age (Pound himself has said so); at some point in his career this professor is going to witness the old order of perception (with regard to Pound) collapse, and in this collapse he may well see his own books diminished. They are not literature and probably will not grow in stature. The decision the professor comes to then will depend on more than intelligence; on more even than human charity. The bubble reputation will be at stake. (It may help at this point to remember some epic prejudices maintained in the past. Virginia Woolf and Wyndham Lewis both disliked Joyce's work, the latter doing all in his verbal power to destroy it; Pound himself eventually disowned Joyce.)

Now I mean to cast no aspersions on this critic. I personally would trust his judgment when it came to a critical book on Pound. I merely want to draw attention to the situation in itself. Its insidious potential is perhaps best commented upon by another example. A poet-translator teaching at an East Coast university had a critically acclaimed translation of *Beowulf* circulating the publishing houses for years. He undertook the translation because he felt the need of a modern version that students could use, and also because, as a poet, he felt challenged by this poem, one of the earliest in any modern language. One publisher after another lost interest in his manuscript until finally he discovered, quite by accident, that the *same* academic reader had rejected it each time—a well-known medievalist at a well-known university. Presumably the professor received a stipend every time he rejected the manuscript—but reject it he did.

I use the above only as examples, and perhaps unfair ones. But consider this kind of thing happening all across the board and you get a glimpse of a type of inbreeding that may have worse effects on the future of the Humanities than any notion of intellectual incest. That the publishers are driven to such extremes indicates on one level the nature of their fear not to be out of what is happening. Granted publishers must and should seek advice. The issue is the manner of their doing so. The example given above is, I think, different from T. S. Eliot's calling in a friend at Cambridge to scrutinise a new manuscript he is excited about: the difference is the one between the computerised factory and the corner store; it is a human difference. No single person should ever become in the eyes of a publisher the official custodian of a myth, not even the Pound myth. The logic on the part of publishers equals in a way the logic of a Madison Avenue firm that calls in an efficiency expert. In seeking, unquestioningly, this kind of opinion, publishers reveal their own true image and something of the respectability and glamour with which they yearn to adorn anything intellectual that passes through their hands. One is reminded of the classic instance in 1957 when the Ford Motor Co. tried to contract Marianne Moore to think up the name of a new series of cars it wanted to put on the market. My general point is that corporations tend to become so mindless in such matters that their behaviour displaces both individuality and imagination.

IT IS A SAD FACT that a writer in America with a serious book may wait longer now than ever before to find a publisher; conceivably he might not find one at all. John Barth, ranked by many academics as one of our best living authors, had his first novel rejected by ten New York publishers; Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* circulated the New York houses for years before someone picked it up; so did Salinger's first book. And Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, as I mentioned, was rejected initially by twelve publishers. Barth's case is worth considering. His first novel, re-issued in 1967 by his *new* publisher, contains the following prefatory note:

> The *Opera* was my first novel; I was twenty-four, had been writing fiction industriously for five years, and had had—deservedly—no success whatever with the publishers. One finally agreed to launch the *Opera*, but on condition that the builder make certain changes in its construction, notably about the stern. I did, the novel was published [1956], critics criticised the ending in particular, and I learned a boatwright little lesson. In this edition the original and correct ending to the story has been restored, as have a number of other, minor passages. *The Floating Opera* remains the very first novel of a very young man, but I'm pleased that it will sink or float now in its original design.

There are other examples, but these authors are fairly representative. Now it may be polite to pretend that purely commercial interests were at stake in all these negative decisions, but this just cannot be the case. What was lacking, I am afraid, had something to do with intelligence and taste—and not even intelligence of a par-

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ticularly high order. That so many publishers could make the wrong decision on so many important books is frightening. One recalls a statement made by Virginia Woolf (when she and Leonard Woolf were planning the Hogarth Press)—that the nurture and sustenance of literature depend on a publisher with intelligence at least equal to that of the author he intends to publish. It is possible that were it not for publishing houses like the Hogarth Press and human forces in publishing like the Woolfs and T. S. Eliot some of our modern classics might not have made it into print, or done so only at tremendous emotional and artistic cost to their authors.

One suspects the situation will get worse. It is becoming harder and harder to discover the decent things that are being published. The publishing houses in many cases can't tell which books of their year's assortment are worthwhile and which are not: often they try hardest to sell the trash and fail altogether to know how to advertise or promote the worthwhile. The best books still get "remaindered" or go out of print before they are discovered. A classic example for some future study on American publishing is the case of Marshall McLuhan. His first book, published in 1951, was remaindered. When he finally made a name for himself his new publishers literally dumped him on the market, providing the unsuspecting reader with no preparation whatsoever for the serious as well as the comic side of his genius; as a result the initial reviewers in the pulp journals floundered hopelessly in an attempt to understand what had hit them.

There was a time one could trust the best reviewers but even this has changed. Some review organs—notably the *New York Review of Books*, which received its initial support from the publishing establishment and is still "subsidised" by them through advertising—deliberately seek controversial reviews. The general effect is often the pursuit of diatribe and mud-slinging: the breaking over cold stones of human reputations. Controversiality often disguises a real disinterest in literature; a yearning for power, to manipulate rather than inform. Reviews often are written to aggrandise the reputations of the reviewers, and only incidentally do justice to the books under review. Many serious books are destroyed by insensitive reviewers, and by "destroyed" I mean that the not so impartial booksellers, and the public, are discouraged from purchasing them; and the book dies in an obscure first printing. Criticism which could be the greatest check on *ersatz* literature and bad publishing becomes just another vehicle of confusion.

Hegel remarked that the Roman era was the prose of history. The craze for non-fiction as opposed to fiction (in books, in magazines) is but another comment on the essentially Roman nature of our civilisation. We prefer the factual to the truly imaginative. For one thing it is easier to read, easier to assimilate and to forget. Most leading U.S. magazines prefer waterish commentary to a respectable short story or a truly imaginative essay, commentary which has almost no life of its own and whose insight will have to be replaced next issue with more of the same. The situation suggests not only the willingness of editors to give in to what they think the public wants (not realising that the public seldom knows what it wants; that potentially its horizon of taste is limitless, though of course it can be treated as though it is not) but more deeply confirms something in themselves and in our age, some unwillingness to rediscover the power of the imagination, to reassess the place of the "irrational" in life. The loss of an important dimension of literature in our lives is, I suspect, comparable to the loss of imaginative structures in our daily speech. A language that moves glacier-like towards the anonymous jargon of *Time Magazine* is a language that does not enjoy itself, that is no longer conscious of its well-springs in man's individual imagination.

Perhaps the most serious failing of our culture which publishing today reflects and in its own way does everything to accommodate (often by doing nothing) is the "new illiteracy." It is a different organism altogether from the one R. P. Blackmur spoke of in the '40s, and has to be viewed today as a disease of language as much as something intellectual or moral. American English would seem to have only so many light years left; it is diminishing in potency and style at a rate greater than any language perhaps at any other time. One can see this everywhere. Literacy as we once knew it is no longer important, is dead in effect; its replacements the mere paralinguistic shadows of articulateness, a new soft currency. We are returning, as McLuhan suggests, to an oral culture —and in this, along with everything else ingenious, America leads the world. But it is not even a kind of oral culture we can recognise. In most oral cultures of the past spoken language was on a high level of development. Our age is different. There is no pressure upon us in our daily lives to communicate by means of language: one depends on newspapers or magazines for instant information; and both have become accessories after the fact of television. The image has replaced the word, the headline

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the sentence. Letter writing (once so developed an art that it could inspire a type of literature, the novel) has almost gone out of existence. One has only to pick up a newspaper in any American city to see the extent of the damage. Compare the prose therein to a newspaper written fifty or one hundred years ago. The syntax is of another order altogether. It is not syntax in the truest sense; nothing "holds together." It is mere *parataxis*, telegraphy. Six words bearing no relation whatever to each other become a headline.

One example. A year or so ago *Time* did an article on Mahler in its music section. A photograph of the Bohemian composer was reproduced, showing him in one of his dour moods. The caption beneath the picture read

> GUSTAV MAHLER (*circa 1905*)
> *A fanatic whose time is now*

If we think about it we can see here a perfect example of how, when language fails, profound understanding does too, and *vice versa*. Everythink is "wrong" with this caption. In essence it tries to say all that the article itself says, and the kind of readers *Time* seems to want will realise this and not bother to read the article. (Much of contemporary journalism happily could do without verbal language altogether and is working unconsciously towards that day.) This is typical of the treatment given the serious artist by the new corporate mentality. Where the medium functions without any conscionable intelligence there is little chance of fair judgment. Language becomes insensitive of clearness and distinction. Intelligence gets traduced, and everything is shrivelled to the condition of a fad. The "attitude" of this caption is interesting. It would seem to be perceptibly condescending (the word "fanatic" has only one meaning in America), an apology for any superfluity of feeling that might have crept into the article itself.

Our best novelists, and there are some who are very good, have almost no interest in language, or if they do it is an embarrassingly elementary interest. Our best poets generally have overlooked the issue, although traditionally the poet has been the custodian of language, and in those ages when he found the basic language lifeless or insufficient in some way for his purpose, struck out against it. No articulate statement exists in the literature of America today, either creative or critical. Only an "outside" group, the so-called Black Mountain poets, most eminent of whom is Charles Olson, have challenged the situation and tried to pinpoint the dead nodes of contemporary vernacular in order to rebuild the lyric idiom from scratch. But with the exception of Olson (a fanatic, perhaps, whose time is not yet) their ideas have been paltry and esoteric.

Nor are the academics much less blind to what is happening. Almost all our universities now have departments of linguistics, and new journals and books on the subject spring into existence every year. Yet there is almost a consistent failure on the part of American linguists to consider language on the European level of enquiry (along the lines, say, of Roman Jakobson or de Saussure); they are arithmeticians all, and show no interest in the power being drained from language.

Literature, and all that it represents, will survive in America, although it may have to go underground to do so, and we may have to witness the total transformation of the publishing establishment from its present half-hearted sponsorship of literature into institutions of public entertainment. That this transformation is already under way no one can seriously doubt. In the interim we can only lament the loss of some fine specimens of the creative spirit in transcendence, and in the great works that somehow make it into print, sympathise with the authors for the anguish they have undergone to acquire such freedom.

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LETTERS

Calder's "Violence"

However right or wrong Pamela Hansford Johnson may be in her attribution of violent acts to violent art [Encounter, February], John Calder's attempted reply to her [Encounter, April] is full of causes imputed where ignorance prevails.

1. "The mass media reflect the violence in society ... but they do not cause it," Calder assures us. Then he adds that the mass media may "determine the *forms* of violence ... but they are most unlikely to be the root cause." Now we have causes, and *root* causes, and quarrels but no knowledge.

2. After telling us what does *not* cause violence, at least not at the root, Calder tells us what does: "frustration." He goes on, then, to list the sources of frustration. People are "frustrated" by "political and social discrimination," by "class exploitation," by having no place to play, by boredom, by sexual and financial restrictions, and "lack of opportunity." In addition there are teen-age "emotional and sexual frustration" and the childhood frustration of "having something to communicate, but not knowing how."

This encyclopedia of "frustration" describes so wide a range of the human predicament that it defines nothing. We are left with everything causing everything and with "frustration" an empty label that is useful only as intellectual dressing on Calder's explanation.

3. On the same page that Calder assures us that the mass media cannot cause violence, he "knows" that they can "create needs for consumer goods, securities, and pleasures. An enormous advertising industry is geared to make us want everything from toothpaste to Marilyn Monroe. . . ."

It seems fair to conclude that the mass media "cause" what it is congenial for Calder to believe they cause.

4. Out of this swamp of ignorance and inconsistency Calder comes carrying a cure for violence. "The answer to violence," he says, "is self-understanding, an awareness of what the frustration is, and the use of reason to cure or come to terms with it."

Nonsense!

Gwynn Nettler

University of Alberta,
Edmonton, Canada

Scooping Mr Fedub?

In his Column of May 1970 your contributor *R* wrote about the falling standards of editing in the leading British newspapers. It is all the more ironical that in the same Column he has fallen for what is a prime example of such lackadaisical editing in one of Britain's "class" newspapers, *The Guardian*. He refers to "a recent letter to Konstantin A. Fedub, Secretary of the Union of Writers of the U.S.S.R. (the smuggled text of which was published in *The Guardian*)" from Alexander Tvardovsky, the recently deposed editor of *Novy Mir*.

As it happens the letter published in *The Guardian* in an abridged form on 13 March 1970 appeared in full in *Survey* magazine, almost two years before, in its July 1968 issue. It was addressed to Mr. Konstantin A. Fedin, the then Secretary of the Soviet Writers Union.

R criticises Mr. Dennis Potter of *The Times* for expressing opinions in such a way that "a careless or hasty reader" might get a false impression. But even an unhasty and careful reader of *The Guardian*'s introduction to Tvardovsky's letter, including *R*, could have had no real idea of the precise facts of the case. For the sake of belated "exclusivity" and sensationalism, and in its editorial haste and carelessness, *The Guardian* implied (though did not state) the newsy topicality of the document and misspelt the name of the addressee.

I am fed up with Mr. Fedub and so should *R* be.

Survey,
London

Leopold Labedz

"Fidel's New Class"

John Mander's review [Encounter, April] of four books, including Herbert L. Matthews' *Castro: A Political Biography*, was marred by at least two blunders, one quite incredible at this late date and the other probably the result of mere carelessness.

Mr. Mander still seems to think that it suited Castro, late in 1961, "not only to claim that he was a Marxist-Leninist, but that he had *always* been one" (Mr. Mander's italics).

In Mr. Matthews' own book, which Mr. Mander was supposed to be reviewing, page 188 of the American edition tries to expose this myth. Mr. Matthews gives his own translation of the crucial sentence as: "I am a Marxist-Leninist and I shall be a Marxist-Leninist until the last day of my life." In effect, Castro said that he would always be a Marxist-Leninist, not that he had always been one.

In 1962, my book, *Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities*, gave the literal translation as: "I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I will be one until the last day of my life" (in the original Spanish: "*Soy marxista-leninista y lo seré hasta los últimos días de mi vida*"). Mr. Matthews himself notes that "the writings of Theodore Draper and other careful students of the Cuban Revolution set the record straight for scholars and for history—but the myth lives on" (p. 189). It even lives on in a review of Mr. Matthews' own book. What could be more ironic than that?

Mr. Mander may also have led some readers to confuse my work with that of Messrs. Huberman and Sweezy. He must know better, but it would have been more responsible if he had not heedlessly counterposed Mr. Matthews' Fidel with "Mr. Draper's or Messrs. Huberman and Sweezy's in their frankly apologetic account." Unfortunately, Mr. Mander never makes clear what my account was, except that he seems to agree with Mr. Matthews that I took Castro's "wordy rhetoric for

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gospel." Anyone who can still believe that Castro said he had always been a Communist—and use this myth as a taking-off point for understanding Castro—might well pay more attention to Castro's words, and even his wordy rhetoric.

Mr. Matthews' book seems to have brought out the worst in some British reviewers. Mr. Matthews is hardly the best authority on what I wrote, but it is something of a shock to find myself so credulously represented in the pages of ENCOUNTER.

THEODORE DRAPER

Institute of Advanced Study,
Princeton, N.J.

MR. DRAPER has evidently not quite caught the drift of my article. I did not say that Castro *had* always been a Marxist-Leninist, nor did I take this myth "as a taking-off point for understanding Castro." I merely pointed out that he had claimed to be a Marxist-Leninist late in 1962, and that the words *"Soy Marxista-Leninista y lo seré hasta los últimos días de mi vida"* (which Mr. Draper quotes in the original Spanish) imply a claim to *have been* a Marxist-Leninist, against all the evidence, long prior to that statement. My main line of argument, as Mr. Draper must surely concede, was that Castro was to be understood as a *caudillo* in the Latin American tradition, rather than as a Communist leader in the European tradition.

I hope not to have confused readers' minds as to the distinction between Mr. Draper's writings, which are well known to readers of ENCOUNTER, and those of "Messrs. Huberman and Sweezy in their frankly apologetic account." Mr. Draper has been accused of many things: not yet of that. But in regard to the assessment that Castro was *not* a Marxist-Leninist in the *Sierra Maestra*, but subsequently attempted to maintain that he had always been one, I cannot see that Mr. Draper, Mr. Matthews, and myself disagree in any material point.

JOHN MANDER

London

"Robin Day's Troubled Reflections"

By Donald Tyerman

IT IS RIGHT that journalists, whether on television or in print, should have a conscience about the consequences of what they are doing. For that reason, the "Troubled Reflections" of Mr. Robin Day in the May ENCOUNTER are a welcome and noteworthy event. They add to the doubt of some people whether the Independent Television Authority has chosen the right man from its short list to be its next Director-General.

It is, however, the habit of all journalists to overstate the importance, for good or bad, of what they do. Television, like printed journalism, is a symptom not a cause, a means not an end; it is not *sui generis*. By definition, of course, mass communications reach and affect more people than older means, even in a country like this one where newspapers go into all households. But it is important not to exaggerate this new pervasiveness. I do not, believe, for instance, that Mr. Day is right, in any useful sense, when he says that "President Kennedy was known to the world as no other American President before him." I believe that President Wilson and President Franklin Roosevelt were known to the world even more.

I believe also that, more topically, the spread of ideas of conflict and violence by old-fashioned speech broadcasting (which still ranges the world more widely than television does), as well as by the printed word, has been even more potent than their spread by television pictures in today's main crisis areas—that is, in South-east Asia itself, in Nigeria/Biafra, and in the Middle East. Mr. Day may point out that this is simply because countries locally concerned in these contentions have not yet had television services of the kind that hypnotise us and the Americans. My reply is that, without the aid of television operating in the way that he describes, we have had in these countries the *same* sort of consequences, in the projection of conflict and violence and in the inflammation of passion and prejudice, that he seems to present as being the *peculiar* dangers of the pictorial journalism that he practices. My conclusion is not that Mr. Day is at all wrong to insist as he does on the risks and responsibilities of television, in the retailing of news and the dissemination of views. It is rather that these are the risks and responsibilities of all kinds of journalism, whether in print, by radio, or on television.

I RECOGNISE the special points that Mr. Day makes: that television, where it has been fully developed, can have a peculiarly direct and instant effect; that television, being tied to pictures, has a primitive, selective and imitative influence; that television, because of technical limitations of channels and stations, is placed in a falsely authoritative, or hortatory, position. I remain convinced, though, that this simply means that television is a special case of the perennial, and paradoxical, problem of purveying information and ideas. It is, for all its distinctive and potent features, just the latest means of doing this, and its problem is paradoxical, as with all journalism, because it can be used equally for good or for ill. The medium is not the message; it is the message that can be, as in all the media, well or ill purveyed.

The paradox is then that, though the dangers which Mr. Day describes among the effects of television are certainly real, all of us who believe, as he does, in freedom and choice as the goals of society must believe equally in the widest spread of

MR. DONALD TYERMAN *was for many years Editor of The Economist.*

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information and ideas, and must believe therefore in the widest spread of television for this purpose. Certainly we must not fall back on the insidious fallacy, used so often in the past against the Press, that if the people did not know they would not care, that if they were not shocked they would stay quiet and content. Television does not invent what happens, any more than newspapers do, though it may select events more arbitrarily and exaggerate them more crudely. It does not create, but reveals, conflict and violence. It has shown the Viet Nam War, not made it what it is. This may be disadvantageous in public competition with unfree societies (though the people of both Viet Nams, for instance, probably do not need television to tell them what goes on). But this is precisely the difference between free and unfree societies—that news and opinion are, or ought to be, unfettered in the one, while they are controlled, conformist, and quietist in the other. (The kind of "tranquillised" Press and television that Vice-President Spiro Agnew in America and some critics here would like to see already exists—in the Soviet Union.)

Mr. Day is right to be troubled by the imperfections of his kind of journalism, just as every newspaper editor ought always to be troubled by the imperfections of his kind. But Mr. Day is even more right when he suggests that the remedy is not to "tranquillise" or confine television.

It is not television that is, or can be, imperfect, dangerous, shocking or tendentious; it is, as in newspapers, those who use it. It needs, as the Press does, "the freedom, responsibility, and independence" that Mr. Day asks for. There is no case at all for putting it under wraps; those who suggest this, because of the "crude shock images" that television, as Mr. Day confesses, can too easily project, really want to brush under the carpet what television can, and ought to, disclose. The challenge is to the professional responsibility of the television journalist, as to all other journalists. More power to Mr. Day's elbow!

On TV Violence

WHAT IS BASICALLY WRONG *with the entire approach to the study of TV violence is the assumption that it is imitative violence that is the main danger; that the mere display of guns being fired, men being coshed, buildings being burned, aeroplanes being sabotaged will encourage others to do the same.*

In my view imitative violence is the least important aspect of the problem. There will be a small psychotic, unstable group who will be attracted by this imitative urge, but this could not possibly account for the rise in violence amongst the young for which TV is being held partly to blame

The case that links TV with social violence is based on the hypothesis that any medium as absorbing and demanding as the small screen, which the young watch for three to four hours a day during the most formative periods of their lives, must be an environmental factor as significant in their lives as such other environmental factors as their home, their neighbourhood, their school and their church.

Everyone would agree that bad parents, a violent neighbourhood, poor schooling, would affect a child. Why, then, should not TV, which dominates many a child's mind and time more than any of these other factors, also affect a child? Once we agree on that assumption, we must ask ourselves what is the total mosaic, the total message that TV is presenting to the adolescent, growing mind.

ABOUT VIOLENCE *the box generally has four things to say.*

First, violence is usually done by the good man for moral reasons. He wins his case by being better at the karate chop, faster on the draw, more adept at the kick in the groin than his opponent. The best man is the man who is best at violence.

Second, violence does not hurt very much. A razor slash shows no blood. An Indian falls painlessly from a horse. A gunshot wound is never seen. The consequences of violence are hidden, diminished, anaesthetised.

Third, there is little pity for the victims of violence. Unlike the great classics where pity and terror were the means of purging us of violence—when Gloucester's eyes are torn out in King Lear we feel revulsion or when a king is murdered in the Greek tragedies we suffer the agonies of his children and wife—in TV there is rarely any concern for the relatives of the Russian spy that has been obliterated by an X-ray gun or the children of the gangster who has plunged from a cliff in the final scene.

Fourth, society demands no explanation for violence. There are no sanctions to be paid for killing or mayhem. Instead of standing trial for murder or manslaughter, the hero is usually rewarded with a smiling blonde and approving fade-out music.

COUPLED WITH THIS *total message of the desirability and virtue of violence in the right hands is the other message that comes from the box that life is trivial, frivolous, greedy, silly. If life is so unworthy isn't violence the moral way to change it?*

To prove or disprove this thesis needs research over a long period of time—probably 10 or 12 years—while a generation of young telly addicts are studied carefully and dispassionately.

Politicians want quick solutions to this question and there are none. The TV hierarchy is keen only on sticking their heads in the sand until the rumpus goes away. The idea that you can measure violence on TV with a stopwatch is the silliest assumption of all.

Milton Shulman *in the* EVENING STANDARD *(London)*

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Koestler & the "Confessions"

THE FASCINATING "COLUMN" by "*R*" on the relevance of Arthur Koestler's novel *Darkness at Noon* to the Stalinist show-trials of the late 1930s misses only one point, but, I fancy, a crucial one.

The fictional Rubashov was based partially, no doubt mainly, on Trotsky. There was, however, one important difference between the two men and that was that the real-life enemy of Stalin was not in the hands of the *NKVD* and consequently was free from physical torture. (He was not free from death by an ice-pick but that's not the same thing; you don't make men talk by killing them.) The result was that although Trotsky was the chief accused at all the trials, it was always *in absentia*. And he alone never confessed. No amount of sophisticated theorising about the need to "save the revolution," even at the expense of one's own life and reputation, produced any semblance of a confession.

Torture alone was sufficient (in which can be included the actual or threatened torture of family and friends). As a Marxist, I feel some reluctance to quote a medieval school-man, but I fancy Occam's Razor is good enough here. Show me as much as a thumb-screw and I will sign anything you like. What need to look further?

It might also be worth mentioning the startling case of Krestinsky, the former deputy-Foreign Minister, who thought so little of saving his revolution that he summoned up the courage needed to tell Vyshinsky in open court that he retracted his confession which had been obtained under torture. The shocked judge adjourned the trial till the following day when the heroic wretch duly retracted his retraction. It is better for one's sleep to avoid trying to imagine what happened to him in the intervening few hours.

It is inescapably clear that physical pressure is the only answer needed for the "confessions" and that, in this matter, Koestler's otherwise fine book was too clever by half.

L. E. WEIDBERG

London

Scottish Poets

IN HIS long article, "The Spoken Word" [ENCOUNTER, January], Patric Dickinson says: "The Scottish poets? This must bring up the quality of the poetry which it is not primarily my business to discuss. . . ." Why should the "Scottish poets . . . bring up the quality of the poetry," and not, for instance, the English poets whom he has commented on previously? Does he, for instance, mean that such a question arises in the case of Hugh MacDiarmid but not in those of, *e.g.*, Vernon Watkins and Norman Nicholson?

It is this kind of remark that almost drives me into the arms of the Scottish Nationalist Party.

Oban,
Argyll

IAIN CRICHTON SMITH

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES

AUTHORS

James Morris *writes*: "I must acknowledge the kindness of Mr. Clinton V. Black, Government Archivist of Jamaica, and of Mrs. Jack of Walreddon Manor; also the debt I owe to Mr. Geoffrey Dutton's biography of E. J. Eyre, *The Hero as Murderer* (Collins, 1967). . . ." James Morris' most recent book was the first volume of his planned trilogy of Empire, *Pax Britannica* (Faber, 1968). . . .

Robin Fox's "The Cultural Animal" will appear in *Man and Beast: Comparative Social Behaviour*, edited by Wilton Dillon, to be published shortly by the Smithsonian Institution Press. . . .

Professor Robert A. Huttenback lectures at the California Institute of Technology. He is the author of several scholarly studies in British imperial and Indian history, including *The British Imperial Experience* (1966). He has just completed a work on *Indians in South Africa, 1860–1914*. An earlier version of his article, under the title "G. A. Henty and the Imperial Stereotype," appeared in the *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, XXIX (1965).

THE interview with **Ignazio Silone** was conducted by **Gastone Duse** of the Italian socialist newspaper *Avanti*, and was translated by **Isobel Quigly**. . . .

François Bondy is an editor of the Swiss weekly *Die Weltwoche* in Zurich. His article in this number is part of a long study of "Sartre's Politics" which will appear in Professor Maurice Cranston's forthcoming volume on *The New Left* (Bodley Head). . . .

George Steiner's article in this number will form the introduction to the Penguin edition of *On the Marble Cliffs* to be published as a Penguin Modern Classic in August. He is now an Extraordinary Fellow of Churchill College. This spring he is receiving the first Zabel Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters for "original and experimental contributions to the study of literature. . . ." He will be a Guggenheim Fellow for 1971, and is working on a full-scale study of the poetics and linguistics of translation. He is delivering the T. S. Eliot Memorial Lecture next March. . . .

G. R. Elton is Professor of History at Clare College, Cambridge. Among his works are *England Under the Tudors* (1955) and *Reformation Europe* (1967). . . .

Matthew Corrigan is a young Canadian teaching in the English department of the State University of New York at Binghamton. His fiction and criticism have appeared in a number of North American journals. . . .

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